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THE MYSTIFICATION OF THE SELF IN TWO SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

by



MUHAMMAD SHURAYDI

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE MYSTIFICATION OF THE SELF IN TWO SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES submitted by Muhammad Shuraydi in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Psychology.



## ABSTRACT

This study undertakes a critical examination and an over-all evaluation of the present status of the "self" in two sociopsychological theories: Symbolic Interactionism and Humanistic Psychology. In addition to a review of the literature with reference to the "self" as an inner agent, the scientific validity and future applicability of the self-theory are explored with attention to the prospects for a "humanistic science." It is shown that the "Cartesian problem of the knower" still plagues the sociopsychological theorizing regarding the agency of "self." This problem, it is maintained, is basically a philosophical one. Hence, evidentiary support is presented to demonstrate that the emphasis on the subjecthood of the "self" in Symbolic Interactionism and Humanistic Psychology is fruitless at an empirical level. Only self-referential constructs with specifiable attributes have potential investigatory value.

The thesis that the resurgence of the "self" in current sociopsychological theories constitutes a therapeutic response to the prevailing crisis of values in contemporary Western society is advanced. That is, the restoration of the "self" as an inner activator has a moral justification, but not a scientific one.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. Introductory Remarks

Maslow (1968 a), who is claimed to be a leading figure of the humanistic movement in social science, states that a great ideological revolution is being witnessed nowadays. Its goal is the "creation of a new image of man and society and of religion and science" (Maslow, 1968 a: 685). Furthermore, it is alleged that this revolution is not an improvement of the traditional models of man, but "a real change in direction altogether." He means that a new image of man is generated by humanistic psychology.<sup>1</sup> This evolving image of man is "a reaction to the gross inadequacies of the behavioristic and Freudian psychologies in their treatment of the higher nature of man." To phrase it differently, these two schools of psychology, are accused by the third force psychology as well as by symbolic interactionism of having mutilated the "dignified image" of man with his "higher intrinsic needs" and "ultimate values" such as "goodness," "truth," "perfection," "justice," etc....

In opposition to the preceding optimistic outlook, Berkowitz (1964, 1969) challenges the faith of the humanistic theorists in the intrinsic goodness of human nature as a return to the late eighteenth-century romantic notion of the "noble savage." Over and above, Berkowitz asserts that the postulation of "mystical growth processes"



such as the "self-actualization tendency" subscribes to an oversimplified picture of child development.

One might be tempted to ask at this juncture a multitude of similar questions with respect to symbolic interactionism. However, two complementary questions will serve the purpose: What about the elevation of the "self" by the symbolic interactionists? Is it true that "nothing esoteric is meant by this expression" (Blumer, 1969a: 12)?

In spite of the recognition that symbolic interactionism "provides the premises for a profound philosophy with a humanistic cast," Blumer views it as "a perspective in empirical social science - as an approach designed to yield verifiable knowledge of human group life and human conduct" (Blumer, 1969: 21).<sup>2</sup>

One would legitimately, and perhaps successfully, question the validity and empirical fruitfulness of Blumer's assertions in the same manner Berkowitz questioned the self-actualization postulate. In other words, humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism may be charged with sharing a fundamental similarity: the romantic glorification of the individual.

Entailed in this glorification is a deliberate emphasis on a process of "rehumanization" of man anchored in at least three underlying, philosophically controversial, assumptions:

1. Man as a free agent or actor.
2. Man as essentially rational.
3. Man as basically good.

These three assumptions, plus others, are explicitly or implicitly acknowledged in the writings of the humanistic theorists and the



symbolic interactionists. Their validity, along with the validity of the "self," will be investigated. This investigation will constitute a major part of the present research and will be highlighted by Ruth Wylie's dissension:

"Thus although these theorists (self-theorists) sometimes laud science and claim that they themselves are working toward scientific theories, their feelings about the scientific method and its implications seem to be markedly ambivalent. Furthermore, their concepts are sometimes inconsistent with scientific assumptions... It seems that these theorists want to have their cake and eat it too. They want to have the advantage of being scientific at the same time they want to reintroduce assumptions which are inappropriate to the scientific method...." (Wylie, 1968: 733).

## II. Exposition of the Problem

The proposed study will, therefore, undertake a critical examination and an overall evaluation of the current status of the "self" in two sociopsychological theories: Symbolic Interactionism and Humanistic Psychology.<sup>3</sup>

The following objectives will be pursued:

1. A critical review of pertinent sociopsychological literature with regard to the "self" as an agent, actor, process, or internal activity, with an emphasis on the romantic, poetic, and metaphoric usages and their scientific utility. This will complement Wylie's review (Wylie, 1961).

2. An evaluative analysis of the explanatory power of the "self" in symbolic interactionism and humanistic psychology. Particular attention will be placed on exploring the adequacy of "self" and



"self-constructs" as analytical, descriptive, and predictive categories.

3. An examination of the previously mentioned three underlying assumptions upon which the model of man is constructed in symbolic interactionism and humanistic psychology. Other assumptions will also be explicated and analyzed.<sup>4</sup>

4. The elaboration of the usage of "self" as a "hypothetical cause of action" (Skinner, 1953) and the comparison of the role it plays in humanistic sociopsychological theories with that of the older concept of the soul. Of relevance in this context is the thesis of whether the proposition of the "self" in humanistic sociopsychological theories could be conceptualized as a response to the predicament of values in Western society.<sup>5</sup>

5. The extrapolation of the basic characteristics of the humanistic orientation and the elucidation of its consequences for social-psychological theory and research; plus, the articulation of its relationship to contemporary and prospective philosophy of the behavioral sciences.

### III. Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Ruth Wylie (1961), in her critical survey of pertinent research literature on the "self-concept," pointed to a noticeable resurgence of interest in personality theories relating to the "self." Her review, however, restricted itself to the "recent empirical literature" (Wylie, 1961: 317). In other words, the task that Wylie undertook confined itself to only one of the two chief meanings of the "self": "Self as subject or agent," and "self as the individual known to



himself"; i.e. "self-concept." It is the present intent to complement Wylie's work with a critical survey and evaluation of the first principal meaning of the "self." The undertaking of this inquiry stems from the present researcher's awareness that the "self," primarily in its first meaning, is becoming a very popular term in certain sociopsychological theories. Its alarming popularity, and indispensability, remind one of the vigorous adoption of the key concept, "attitude," which once was "bearing most of the descriptive and explanatory burdens of social psychology" (Allport, 1967) and whose utility has been challenged after years of disappointing research efforts. Moreover, the emphasis on the first meaning of "self" confronts the humanistic theorists: symbolic interactionists included, with the central challenge: Whether they "can develop an adequate philosophy of science and an adequate methodology of science which will truly add to verified knowledge and at the same time truly recognize the place of the subjective human being (Rogers, 1965a: 2). In different terminology, the focal questions become: What types of explanatory styles, conceptual manifestations, and verifying indices would students of the social sciences anticipate from the "inner-hypothesis" (Rogers, 1963), "subjective-validity" (Wylie, 1961), "humanistic-methodology" (Kelly, 1969; Progoff, 1970; Sargent, 1970), "primacy-of-the-subjective" (Bugental, 1967), "spiritual-method" (Progoff, 1970), "experiential-reality" (Guardo, 1968) orientation? Would there be a reconsideration of the role of introspection (Bakan, 1967; Bergin, 1964) and a reintroduction of "mentalistic concepts" on "empirical grounds" (Harman, 1969; Hebb, 1960)?



The foregoing questions are basic to the methodology and philosophy of the so-called "new science of the subjective" (Harman, 1969). In order to extract the characteristics of "this new science" and reflect on its present and future potentialities, especially with respect to the explanatory, analytical, predictive, and scientific power of the first meaning of the term "self," and their implications for the behavioral sciences, the proposed study will be conducted through four distinct phases:

1. An analytical review of the works of several well known authors in symbolic interactionism and humanistic psychology,<sup>6</sup> will be engaged to derive the primary premises and hypotheses about the "self" and the specification of its nature, meanings, and functions. Major attention will be placed on the metaphorical assumptions. At least three types of fallacies will be investigated:

- a) The fallacy of reification.
- b) The jingle fallacy, (Hartley, 1967).
- c) The jangle fallacy, (Hartley, 1967).

2. A schematic outline will be constructed of some major problems or issues to which the self-theorists purport to offer solutions. For instance, Gergen (1971) suggests five problems. A detailed examination of these problems and their suggested "solutions" will be pursued. Included here is the question of empirical corroboration on which these "solutions" are contingent.

3. The methodological objectives of the so-titled "humanistic methodology" will be described and contrasted with the traditional psychoanalytic-behavioristic methodologies which it opposes and claims



to refute. Its viability will be scrutinized in terms of the assertions it makes about the nature of man, the requirements of science, theory, research, and experimentation.

4. The dissertation will end with attention to the implications and conclusions gleaned from the study. These are discussed below.

#### IV. Implications and Conclusions

Implications and conclusions will be presented on two levels:

1. The level of "self" or "self-construct" with attention to the scientific validity and future applicability of these ideas. The argument adopted will explore the stance that the "self," especially in its first meaning, has been stretched to incorporate a great variety of cognitive, motivational, and mystical phenomena, yielding it a vacuous explanatory category.<sup>7</sup>

2. The level of the behavioral sciences: One of the intriguing questions that will be entertained is whether the so-labelled "new science of the subjective" is in reality "a new breakthrough" or merely an "old wine in new wineskins" (Harman, 1967). Encapsulated in this question is the contention that the humanistic persuasion is a retreat to the pre-Khaldunic and eternally captivating question of how man ought to live. Hence, it will be questioned whether the humanistic social thinkers are utopians postulating the same medieval metaphysical assumptions about the ideal nature of man and society which leads necessarily to the invention of a transexperiential world. An evaluation will be made of the charge that the romantic glorification of man in symbolic interactionism and humanistic psychology is "based



more on wishes of what man should be like than on actual hard fact"  
(Berkowitz, 1969: 87).



FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Also labelled as: third force psychology, epi-behavioristic, epi-Freudian, growth, depth, phenomenological, existential, self, psychology.

<sup>2</sup>Emphasis supplied.

<sup>3</sup>The term "theory" is used in a very broad, general sense. "Perspective" would perhaps be a more accurate term.

<sup>4</sup>See Bugental (1964) "basic postulates and orientation of humanistic psychology."

<sup>5</sup>This part relates to the all-embracing theme of the human situation in Western society: that is, modern man is seized between his grief about a "dead God" and the dissatisfaction with the "Absolutes" that have displaced him. He yearns for a "New Jerusalem" and craves for a "Promised Savior." This somehow explains the emphasis of the humanistic theorists on the "Real Self," which, to the majority, is such a savior. Illustrative quotations are: "The need for a humanistic psychology derives directly from the fact that we are living in a secular culture without a framework of values to guide us... We require a personal, psychological, spiritual method that can serve as the thread to guide us through the labyrinths of modern life" (Progoff, 1970). "... In 'Humanistic Psychology' the title suggests theology to those who have no religious beliefs, and atheism to those who have" (Cardno, 1966).

<sup>6</sup>Concentration will be on the works of the following authors: James, Cooley, Mead, and Fromm, Maslow, Rogers.

<sup>7</sup>See Wylie (1968), Passmore (1966), Oakeshott (1966), and Langer (1969).



## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS - FURTHER ELABORATION

#### I. Beyond Freedom and Dignity Versus Back to Freedom and Dignity

The significance of the present study has been revealed very recently in Skinner's latest book, Beyond Freedom and Dignity (1971). A satisfactory appraisal of the controversy involved requires a brief survey of the major ideas in this book and its contrast with its counterpart, Maslow's The Psychology of a Science (1966).

The themes that run throughout Skinner's book are not unfamiliar to persons acquainted with the behavioristic tradition since it was initiated by the Watsonian revolt in 1913, nor are they new to students of the social sciences who are aware of the preceding arguments and attempts at what is termed "social engineering."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, they are consistent with the old themes that have been dominating behaviorism. Watson himself, needless to mention, was charged with "environmentalism." In a question form, therefore, one might be tempted to ask: What is newly challenging about Skinner's book? The answer requires a brief exposition of the major ideas in this book.

The all-embracing message of the book is that the attribution of human behavior to "indwelling agents" (p. 8), "states of mind" (p. 15), "autonomous man" (pp. 14, 15), or "inner gatekeeper" (p. 187),<sup>2</sup> is outside the realm of scientific analysis. In other words,



mentalistic explanations of human behavior should be discarded or rejected because "behavior is shaped and maintained by its consequences" (p. 18), that is by contingencies of reinforcement that belong to the environment. The two essential attributes of autonomous man, freedom and dignity, are, as a consequence, dispensed with. The implication here is that within the Skinnerian paradigm "all control is exerted by the environment" which should overtake the roles played by the traditional autonomous man. The external environmental conditions, moreover, have already been specified in a number of concepts and variables such as "operant," "schedules of reinforcement" etc... whose applicability and generality extend to all domains of behavior, human and animal. An appropriate question at this juncture is: Does Skinner deny the existence of mentalistic phenomena or concepts? The answer to this question is explicated in a previous article by Skinner as well as in his new book.

"In its extension to the social sciences... behaviorism means more than a commitment to objective measurement. No entity or process which has any useful explanatory force is to be rejected on the grounds that it is subjective or mental. The data which made it important, must, however, be studied and formulated in effective ways" (Skinner, 1963: 958).

Skinner stated this same stand or position in his recent book as follows:

" 'Methodological behaviorism' limits itself to what is publicly observed; mental processes may exist, but they are ruled out of a scientific consideration by their nature... The difference is not in the stuff of which the private world is composed, but in its accessibility" (Skinner, 1971: 190-191).



These two quotations illustrate the divergence that exists between behaviorism and its opponent schools (such as humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism) with regard to certain issues in the philosophy of science. In brief, Skinnerian behaviorism bypasses the interest in mental processes and internal events because it assumes that "private and public events have the same kinds of physical dimensions" (Skinner, 1963). In addition, it argues that they are conditioned by stimuli or factors from the outside and that the fundamental technique of an objective study of behavior is to correlate observable variables with observable bodily or organismic responses or operants. In different terminology, Skinner views the belief that mind or consciousness are irreducible to any form of physical changes as "an anachronism or a last lingering of survival of primitive animism."

It is maintained that mental or cognitive processes, as well as the attributes of freedom and dignity, are no longer adequate to explain and predict behavior. Prediction and control of behavior come through the experimental analysis of contingencies of reinforcement.

The inevitable conclusion becomes the "abolition" of "autonomous man":

"...the inner man, the homunculus, the possessing demon, the man defended by the literature of freedom and dignity. His abolition has long been overdue. Autonomous man is a device used to explain what we cannot explain in any other way. He has been constructed from our ignorance, and as our understanding increases, the very stuff of which he is composed vanishes. Science does not dehumanize man, it de-homunculizes him, and it must do so if it is to prevent the abolition of the human species" (Skinner, 1971: 200).<sup>3</sup>

Embodied in the foregoing quotation is the warning that western



civilization will bring about its own disintegration "if it continues to take freedom or dignity, rather than its own survival, as its principal value" (Skinner, 1971: 181). Of relevance in this context is the Skinnerian conviction of the possibility of constructing "ideal" societies based on operant conditioning. Viewed from this perspective, Beyond Freedom and Dignity is a non-fictionalized version of Walden Two (Time, September, 1971).

It is convenient at this point to bring together the discussion with the repetition of the question that was entertained before: What is newly challenging about Skinner's book? Answers to this question will vary with the acceptance or rejection of the behavioristic model and its philosophy of science. It was maintained throughout this review that the basic ideas are not novel to individuals with some knowledge of the behavioristic tradition. Nevertheless, what is stimulating in this book is Skinner's urgent demand for a shift of attention from the individual to the environment. One might speculate about the multitude of reactions this "ultimatum" will arouse at this period in the history of western culture and history of the social sciences.

In the social sciences specifically, (as was seen in Chapter I), it is claimed that a great ideological revolution is being vouched for nowadays. Its revolutionary goal is the elevation of a new picture of man with his higher needs for "intrinsic" and "ultimate" values of "goodness," "truth," "beauty," "perfection," "justice," "order," "altruism," "dignity," "Real Self" etc... The exponents of this movement seek to dismantle the obliquity inflicted on man's



nature by the behavioristic and psychoanalytic traditions. In other words, the Skinnerian behavioristic revolt is counteracted by a "humanistic" one that insists on rejecting, if not denouncing, the scientific model borrowed from the physical sciences with its pursuit of prediction, explanation, and control. This group of social theorists proposes a different conception of the meaning of a scientific inquiry, its aims, and methodology.

## II. Maslow's The Psychology of a Science

Maslow describes his book as a critique of orthodox mechanistic science (as contrasted with what he calls humanistic science) and the philosophy in which it is grounded. The "dehumanizing" "mechanical" model of man that this science presupposes, Maslow adds, has been opposed in the last decade or two by a counter-philosophy that conforms to the zeitgeist and whose main attempt is "a rediscovery of man and his capacities, needs, and aspirations" (Maslow, 1966: 2). It is, furthermore, contended that "when one wishes knowledge of persons or societies, mechanistic science breaks down altogether" (Maslow, 1966: 5). The search for generalizations in mechanistic science, Maslow argues, is denied in humanistic science that "must" concentrate on, if not admire, the peculiarities and unique qualities of the human individual. The best method or approach to the study of man, is, therefore, the "subjective report" which, Maslow admits, requires "trust," "good will" and "honesty."<sup>4</sup>

Another distinction that Maslow draws between the two types of "science" is that mechanistic science is "method-centering" while



humanistic science is "problem-centering."<sup>5</sup> Maslow's manifesto is expressed as follows: "I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail" (Maslow, 1966: 15-16). Many questions can be derived from this primary "hypothesis."

1. Does "mechanistic science," particularly in the form of behaviorism as a philosophy of science, limit itself to a narrow range of selected techniques that determine the sifting of problems to be studied?

2. Should one of the central objectives of "science" be the indulgence in old philosophical controversies, what Maslow designates as questions of higher nature, that haunted man over the ages and which man was unable to resolve?

3. Should science pretend or aspire to answer every possible question, especially about social-psychological phenomena, that preoccupies man's thinking? Or should science confine its endeavors or aspirations to an actuarial approach where the emphasis would be on finding practical answers to practical or pressing problems or social situations?

4. Based on the foregoing three questions, an inclusive question could be posed: What tools or pathways for knowledge are available in science and what are the reasons for the adoption of one rather than another?

In the light of this fourth question, "Maslow's manifesto" would be rephrased as: "If the most effective, practical or fruitful instrument for dealing with nails is a hammer, then it should be



preferred to any other instrument."

This rephrasing has bearing on the following:

1. The availability of approaches to knowledge.
2. The nature of the problem studied.
3. The efficiency or effectiveness of one approach over another.

In other terms, expounders of "mechanistic science," one can debate, are fully knowledgeable of the existence of more than one technique or procedure to study the same phenomena or data. However, the choice of one approach over another is a matter of utility or adequacy rather than availability. Besides, if one accepts Maslow's assertion that the goal of "humanistic science" is primarily the "sheer fascination with human mystery and enjoyment of it" (Maslow, 1966: 40), one would then raise the suitable question: How does science differ from art, literature, everyday affairs, etc... or for that matter from mythology?<sup>6</sup> The suggestion here is that there seems to be no apparent necessity or justification for the usage of the term "science" unless the term itself has acquired some prestigious qualities that it has become embarrassing to give them up.

Maslow's revolt against the prediction and control of persons can be characterized as an ambiguous mystical search for an inspiring poetic experience whose vocabulary are known in advance and whose object of admiration is the "self" (Maslow, 1966: 43)<sup>7</sup> which is seen as synonymous with the same existential vocabulary because they are its "defining characteristics." Thus, Skinnerian behaviorism, with its rejection of mentalistic phenomena as scientific data, will very sketchily be contrasted with Maslow's "experientialism," with its



emphasis on phenomenological knowledge.

### III. Skinner's Behaviorism Versus Maslow's Experientialism<sup>8</sup>

While Skinner is advocating the abolition of autonomous man with his attributes of freedom and dignity, Maslow is calling for the restoration of such attributes, of which "mechanistic science," Maslow complains, has stripped modern man. A shift of placing importance on the environment instead of the individual is upheld by Skinner. In contrast, the humanistic theorists ponder about the necessity of re-orienting psychology to explicitly recognize the primacy of the inner experiences over observable phenomena (e.g. Bergin, 1964; Bugental, 1967). Contrary to what Skinner advocates, Maslow believes that "science with the psyche left in can be shown to be more powerful than science which excludes experiential data" (Maslow, 1966: 47). This assertion stands in need of a serious investigation whose conclusion will be revealed in the final sections of the present research. Due to these two conflicting claims, over what Bugental (1967) terms "a battle for man's soul," a strong call for a "humanistic methodology" has been urged.

### IV. Humanistic Methodology - Challenges and Prospects<sup>9</sup>

A primary assumption in "humanistic methodology" to which almost all humanistic researchers adhere is stated by Kelly (1969: 64).

"To the humanist every man is a scientist by disposition as well as by right, every subject is an incipient experimenter and every person is by daily necessity a fellow psychologist."



This leading assumption has many methodological implications that will be succinctly summarized.

A. Structuring of the Experimenter's Role in Humanistic Methodology

Kelly (1969) depicts two kinds of experimenters or researchers:

1. The constructive alternativist.
2. The accumulative fragmentalist.

The first, it is ascertained, "sees the efforts of man in the perspective of the centuries." He searches for "truths" that may be everlasting and engages in the exploration of "only one of the many constructions of man." The importance of the search is placed on the richness of experience secured from the engagement in the research process rather than the certainty and precision of the explanations derived from the hypotheses tested. This pertains to the humanistic perception that every scientist should conceive of himself as a subject of his own research.

The accumulative fragmentalist is portrayed by Kelly as:

"If he is one who imagines himself accumulating nuggets of ultimate truth he will place his primary research emphasis on the unassailability of his fragmentary findings. If he supports something at the .05 level of confidence he is encouraged, if he pushes it to the .01 level he is gratified, if he turns it out at the .001 level he is ecstatic and if it reaches the .0001 level he wonders how to write an application for the Nobel prize. The research objective of such a man is to pin something down once and for all. His eternity is in his data" (Kelly, 1969: 59).

The distinction between the two kinds of experimenters is coupled with the humanistic postulate that the ultimate source of validation should



be human experience rather than nonhuman, statistical, procedural or methodological criteria. It is obvious that the ridicule explicit in Kelly's description of the accumulative fragmentalist reflects the abhoring reaction of the humanistic theorists, as well as the symbolic interactionists, to what they view as the triviality of the issues studied and the segmentation of the functioning and experience of a whole human being (Blumer, 1969a; Bugental, 1964).

B. Structuring the Subject's Role in Humanistic Methodology

Humanistic methdology insists on the active participation of the subject in the experimental situation. The subject's ideas about or reactions to what is being done are reckoned as an integral part of the research activity. Kelly (1969) disputes that to take only "behaviors" into consideration in experimentation and to disregard what subjects have to say is to remain "willfully ignorant" of the actual events that take place (see also Blumer, 1969a: 51).

C. Research Experience and Strategy in Humanistic Methodology

The research experience and strategy in humanistic methodology presumably involve the following:

1. A candid collaboration or exchange between subject and experimenter.
2. Subjecting of the experimenter's "self" to the same experimental procedures he proposes for his subjects. The experimenter's experiences should be correlated with those of his subjects.
3. Emphasis on keen observation of "everything" that happens, or what Blumer (1969a) calls "the direct examination of the social



world," than circumscribing observation to the variables under investigation.

4. Concentration on "one's sense of experiential reality" as a more valid source of knowledge rather than the statistical levels at which experimental conclusions are corroborated. Bugental (1964) specifies this stand in the dictum: "Humanistic psychology looks for human rather than nonhuman "validation... the criterion must be that of human experience."

5. A heavy reliance on the "necessity of first-hand-clinical understanding" (Kelly, 1969: 60). (See also Blumer, 1969a: 36, 39.)

6. The prevalence of an optimistic outlook on man's capacity as a "pro-active" agent.

7. The preoccupation with "meaningful issues" rather than procedures.<sup>10</sup>

8. An assumed recognition of the relativity of all knowledge. (Blumer, 1969a; Bugental, 1964, 1967; Kelly, 1969; Sargent, 1967.)

D. Humanistic Criteria for Evaluating Theory and Research

It is asserted (Sargent, 1967) that humanistic psychologists have reached a consensus on certain categories or criteria for the evaluation of social-psychological theories and research. These categories are enumerated with the concomitant questions they pose.

1. "Breadth and inclusiveness": To what degree does the viewpoint under consideration reflect man's weltanschauung or philosophy of life? Bugental's (1964) statement of the issue is that "man, as man, supercedes the sum of his parts." That is to say, man is



distinguished as "a unique species."

2. "Social orientation": What types of relationships prevail among men and what degree of "authenticity" do they involve? In Bugental's (1964) terminology: "Man has his being in a human context."

3. "Focus on the experiencing person": What value is assigned to feelings or experience? Bugental (1964) sums this up as "man is aware."

4. "Concern with higher human qualities": Does the theory or viewpoint reflect an involvement with "higher human qualities" such as "love," "sympathy," "empathy," "autonomy," "transcendence" etc... In Bugental's (1964) phraseology: "man has choice."

5. "Consideration of values, goals and purposes": Is man future-seeking and self-actualizing, or is he merely a reactive bystander? In Bugental's vocabulary: "man is intentional." He "intends through having purpose, through valuing, and through creating and recognizing meaning."

6. "Methodology": Is the theory or viewpoint problem oriented or technique oriented?

This chapter has chiefly embarked on the crucial controversy in the philosophy of the social sciences pertaining to the subjective-objective view of perceiving "social reality." It was exemplified that the wrangle over man's basic nature persists with certain perennial questions. It was also denoted that while some schools or social theories are demanding a termination of the idolization of the individual's attributes of freedom and dignity, plus other "higher qualities," other schools, with a humanistic bent, are pleading for an



immediate reformation of the social sciences that would restore these same attributes. The issue was schematized as conflictive in nature: "Beyond freedom and dignity" versus "back to freedom and dignity."

In summary, modern psychology, according to the humanistic theorists, is confronted with the task of "bringing us an authentic spiritual method" (Progoff, 1970: 128) whose major enterprise is man with his endowment of the "self" that is envisaged "as an unfolding actualizer" (Kovacs: 170) or as an "inner agent." A review of the literature that has evolved within the orbit of this conception of the "self" is in order. It is worth mentioning, as a preface to this review, Boshier's (1970) comment that the notion of "self" and "self-concept" has regained prominence after a demise in the behaviorist graveyard. It is hoped that the review will pave the way to a critical exploration of the factors responsible for the resumption of interest in the "self" and the prospects and challenges of the "self-theory."



FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Skinner's new term is "behavioral engineering."

<sup>2</sup>That is to say, the "self" as an "inner agent."

<sup>3</sup>Skinner, in his chapter on the "self" in his Science and Human Behavior, portrays the traditional ways that make use of the concept "self," or the recent label "autonomous man." He states that it is commonly used as a "hypothetical cause of action," which is fundamentally the same stance he is adhering to in his recent book.

"So long as external variables go unnoticed or are ignored, their function is assigned to an originating agent within the organism. If we cannot show what is responsible for a man's behavior, we say that he himself is responsible for it. The precursors of physical science once followed the same practice, but the wind is no longer blown by Aeolus, nor is the rain cast by Jupitor Pluvius" (Skinner, 1963: 283).

<sup>4</sup>The perennial problem of the methodological drawbacks of verbal report or of accepting what people say as indicators of what they will do has been skillfully treated by De Fleur (1963), Deutscher (1966), and Nettler (1970). In addition Freud has very insightfully demonstrated how "trust," "good will," and "honesty" etc... could sometimes be but convincing instances of man's ability to rationalize.

<sup>5</sup>This distinction is also shared by other humanistic theorists - e.g. Blumer (1969a), Bugental (1964), Kelly (1969), and Sargent (1967).

<sup>6</sup>For an illustration of the distinction here see Marx (1963: 10-14). Similarly, Nettler (1970) warns that "Responding to each other, in the political arenas as in the domestic ones, remains little science, mostly art" (p. 210).

<sup>7</sup>In many of Maslow's writings, "self-actualization" or "peak" experiences are depicted as analogous to poetic or mystical experiences. Furthermore, the same vocabulary is always dominant, such as "truth," "justice," "goodness," "beauty," "order," "unity," "comprehensiveness" etc... (Maslow, 1966: 43).



8

Linked with this contrast is Maslow's distinction between that he labels as "spectator knowledge" versus "interpersonal-relationship-knowledge." (See Maslow, 1967: 104-105.) For further elucidation, Bugental's summary of the differences between the humanistic and the behavioristic orientations is presented. "The humanistic psychologist ... disavows as inadequate and even misleading descriptions of human functioning and experience based wholly or in large part on subhuman species.

... insists that meaning is more important than method in choosing problems for study, in designing and executing the studies, and in interpreting their results.

... gives primary concern to man's subjective experience and secondary to his actions, insisting that this primacy of the subjective is fundamental in any human endeavor.

... sees an interaction between 'science' and 'application' - such that each constantly contributes to the other and the attempt to rigidly separate them is recognized as handicapping both.

... is concerned with the individual, the exceptional, and the unpredicted rather than seeking only to study the regular, the universal, and the conforming.

... seeks that which may expand or enrich man's experience and rejects the paralyzing perspective of 'nothing but' thinking" (Bugental, 1967: 6-7).

9

The challenges as listed by Bugental (1967: 8) are:

"... develop adequate methods and criteria for a true science which is yet a human oriented one.

... demonstrate that such a view of man is feasible and is more fruitful in enriching man's life than is a mechanomorphic one.

... close the gap with the physical sciences that man may survive and that he may survive with dignity.

... offset the depersonalizing, man-as-object influences of increasing population and mass society so that man may retain and enlarge his domain of subjecthood.

... explore the 75 to 90% of man's potential which today is largely latent."

10

Blumer states the issue in this fashion: "Reality exists in the empirical world and not in the methods used to study that world; it is to be discovered in the examination of that world and not in the analysis or elaboration of the methods used to study that world" (Blumer, 1969a: 27).



### CHAPTER III

#### THE "SELF" AS AN INNER AGENT: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

##### I. Philosophical Overview

When one is surveying the literature on the "self" as an inner activator or agent, the major question confronted is: "Who am I?" The roots of this question and man's uninterrupted search for an answer could be traced back to the pre-Platonic era. In other terms, they are older than the Socratic admonition "know thy self." Thus, Claus (1970b), in an ingenious semantic analysis of the term "psyche," tells us that the Homeric use of "psyche" is ambiguously described and impregnated by "a number of concrete, primitive, expressions of 'life'" ... Outside the Homeric text, 'life' could be defined concretely as a Genius-like spirit that dwells within man." "Psyche," that is to say, was identified in the fifth century B.C. with not only "life spirit," "vital essence," or "vital force," "but also one which drives and impels man in life." Towards the end of the fifth century, Claus further informs us, there was an emergence of some "rationalistic or non-demonic" trends whose aim was the demolition of "psyche" as an "archaic and poetic" term followed by a resurgence in the philosophical views of Democritus and Heraclitus.

"The first uses of psyche as the intellectual and moral 'self' of a man are found in Democritus and the first appearance of the soma-psyche dichotomy in the Medical Writer, facts which suggest that psyche first became the 'self' as a form of the



rationalized 'life force' ultimately derived from the Homeric 'vital essence' that can be 'destroyed' after death" (Claus, 1970b: 2895).

There is no necessity to delve into the historical, philosophical and problematic issues, particularly the sophistic movement with its insistence on the unattainability of universal, demonstrative or absolute knowledge about the nature of man and the epistemological-metaphysical problems with which early Greek philosophers and cosmologists had grappled. The breakdown in communication with respect to private events, mythical beings or transexperiential phenomena was competently propounded by Protagoras in his three well-known statements:

1. There is nothing.
2. Even if there were something we could not know it.
3. Even if it existed and we could know it, we could not communicate this knowledge (Thilly, 1961: 58).

As a reaction to sophistry, the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions stressed the distinction between the material and the non-material or spiritual aspects of a human being. Hence, the sophists were imputed with confounding "appearance" and "reality." Man was again dignified as:

"The measure of all things, of all truth, in the sense that universal concepts, ideas, and principles lie embedded in his soul and form the starting point of all his knowledge" (Thilly, 1961: 77).

It was Descartes in the seventeenth century who reaffirmed the same stand. His proposition, "I think, therefore, I am," supposedly solved the original problem of substance to which early Greek



philosophers addressed themselves.<sup>1</sup>

It is critical to note that substance, or the "I" in the Cartesian proposition, referred to a spiritual entity, which later on became "one direct predecessor of the concept of self in psychology" (Gergen, 1971: 7).

In any case, the Cartesian resolution of the problem of substance was not lasting. It was shortly challenged by the development of British Empiricism that culminated in David Hume's derivation of the logical conclusions of the theories of his predecessors, especially the Berkeleyan credo, "to be is to be perceived." Hume's argument was put forth in this manner: If all we are capable of knowing is sense impressions that are derived from experience and that are probable or contingent, then there is no logical justification for the assumption of any kind of substance, material or spiritual. As a consequence, the idea of substance, Hume affirms, becomes meaningless and lacking any empirical evidence. This has cardinal pertinence to his "bundle theory of the self."

"... When I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself, at any time, without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception" (Hume: A Treatise on Human Nature, Vol. I, Pt. IV, sec. 6, p. 534).

Chisholm (1969), in a highly intriguing article on "The Observability of the Self," discusses the thesis according to which one is never aware of the subject of experience; i.e. the "self as it is in itself" or as an inner motivating agent. He mentions that the two great traditions of contemporary western philosophy, "phenome-



nology" and "logical analysis," tend to agree with this thesis. Since both traditions trace their source to Hume, Chisholm goes on to examine Hume's doctrines regarding the "self" in order to point out some "philosophical mistakes." One of these errors singled out is that the "self" is not merely a collection of various isolated perceptions, as Hume upholds, but that the process of experiencing these perceptions itself shows that there is "someone," "something," a "subject" that feels the "cold" or "warm," "love" or "hate," etc...

This is stated in the words of Professor Price:<sup>2</sup>

"... it looks very much as though the self that Hume professed to be unable to find is the one that he finds to be stumbling - to be stumbling into different perceptions. How can he say that he does not find himself - if he is correct in saying that he finds himself to be stumbling and, more fully, that he finds himself stumbling on certain things and not to be stumbling on certain other things" (Chisholm, 1969: 10).

The misinterpretation or difficulty entangled in this context is that Hume's "bundle theory of the self" did not strive to deny the existence of the "self" but simply to deliberate "what the self is and what the self is not"<sup>3</sup> (Chisholm, 1969: 10). In short, Hume's theory defines the "self" as a collection of particular perceptions with the recognition of the fact that these perceptions are amenable to empirical confirmation. Blended with this definition of the "self" is the implicit assumption that even if the subjecthood of the "self" is assumed or known to exist, one's knowledge of its intrinsic nature or of this subjecthood is not "empirically discoverable," to use Russell's terminology.

In addition to the aforementioned first meaning of the "self,"



Chisholm explicates a second meaning which was previously hinted to in the view that "someone," "something" or a "subject" finds the distinct kinds of perceptions.

"If Hume finds what he says he finds, that is to say, if he finds not only perceptions, but also that he finds them and hence that there is someone who finds them, how can his premises be used to establish the conclusion that he never observes anything but perception?... What Hume found, then, was not merely the particular perception but also the fact that he found those perceptions as well as the fact that he failed to find certain other things" (Chisholm, 1969: 11-12).

The above quotation brings forward the central question about the nature of the "bundle" and the "bundled." The "bundled" refers to the states of awareness or consciousness which are held together by "the same self or person" that "apprehends them all." What this amounts to is the conclusion that the "bundle," or "self" in this sense, is an inner integrating agent that is manifested only through its attributes or qualities and with which one has no direct acquaintance.<sup>4</sup> There exists an agreement on this viewpoint among the two traditions of contemporary western philosophy. Chisholm, however, stretches the explication into a very ambiguous and empirically barren resolution.

"How can a man be acquainted with anything unless the thing manifests or presents itself to him? And how can the thing manifest or present itself unless it manifests or presents itself as having certain qualities or attributes" (Chisholm, 1969: 21).

To put it differently, Chisholm seems to define the "self" as an internal agent known only through the manifestation of its attributes. Although the extension of the meaning of the "self" to this level



tends to leave it vulnerable to empirical sterility, it chiefly serves one major function according to some adherents of the "self theory": It "acts as an effective theoretical tool in pulling a vast quantity of descriptive facts into coherence," and, therefore, offers "a rounded explanation of human motivation including the operation of specific bodily needs (such as hunger, sex, etc.) as well as the person's ambitions and setting of consistent goals with regard to his social and occupational attainments, long range concerns in interpersonal relations, and the directions that he takes in group relations" (Sherif and Sherif, 1969: 383-384).

The conceptual difficulties encountered in such a wide definition of the concept "self" have led to obvious theoretical perplexities, ambiguous definitional interpretations, and inconsistent research strategies. The anticipated outcome an investigator runs into becomes not solely the multiple approaches to the problem and the diversity of entities beyond necessity "but (the) different views of what the problem really is" (Haire, 1969).

Pertinent to the foregoing notion of a "rounded explanation" offered by the self-theorists is Passmore's and Oakeshott's (1966) analysis of the striking feature of extreme generality or specificity of an explanatory concept. It is shown that both extreme generality or extreme specificity may yield the defining concepts "vacuous in either of two directions: they may become vacuous through applying to nothing at all, or through applying to everything, whereby losing their usefulness as modes of distinguishing" (Passmore, 1966).

As a summary to this chapter, it is commendable to remember



Buddha's, the "Enlightened One's," refusal to answer the question: "What am I? Is there a self; and what is its nature?"<sup>5</sup> (Bahm, 1968: 133). In an insightful article, Bahm analyzes the reasons why Buddha refused to answer this question. Man's perpetual search for answers to questions that cannot be answered, or man's dissatisfaction with the answers to questions that can be only partially or incompletely answered is accentuated in the light of what Gautama, Buddha, calls the "greed for views." That is, man's greed for knowledge culminates, like any other form of greed, in frustration or unhappiness. Greed for knowledge is best demonstrated in man's metaphysical quests, which draw him "farther and farther into a maze of unanswerable questions" (Bahm, 1968: 137).

This verdict appears to sustain its validity in relation to the philosophical background of the controversies surrounding man's knowledge of the subjecthood of the "self," or the "self as it is in itself." The range of this knowledge, needless to repeat, has pre-Platonic roots that continue to haunt the social-psychological assumptions about man's social nature. In general, one cannot but wonder about the dilemma that one's acquaintance with the attributes of the "self" does not diminish one's search for answers to the incessantly unanswerable questions about this "hypothetical agent" that is reputed to guard one's perceptual processes or integrate them. A scientific approach to the question would most likely benefit from Protagoras's precaution that even if a mythical agent existed and we could know it, our language is inadequate to communicate this knowledge. Evidence from studies of subliminal perception indicates



that Protagoras was correct. The inadequacy of language to reflect the richness of the individual's perceptual experiences has been established (Eriksen, 1960).

An alternative way of phrasing the present issue would be this: Global hypotheses and explanations about the "self" as an inner activator persist to be conjectural and lacking in verifiability. The profound implication from this framework would be the appreciation of Protagoras's sophistry and Hume's skepticism. Man's knowledge with regard to the "self" as an inner agent beyond the theorizing of these two figures looks to have been arrested. Hume's "bundle theory of the self," i.e. the "self" as an object defined in terms of the particular perceptions of the individual, has been the arena of recent empirical research that has been skillfully reviewed by Wylie (1961). In spite of a partial success, "the total accumulation of substantive findings is disappointing, especially with regard to the great amount of effort which obviously has been expended" (Wylie, 1961: 317). Consequently, one is inclined to conclude that man's epistemological spectrum of himself, his fellow men, and his surroundings has not been significantly transformed beyond the old but perpetual controversies.

Entailed here, and derived from Passmore's and Oakeshott's previous discussion, is the proposition that the "self" as an inner integrating or unifying agent may have become a vacuous umbrella term applying to a wide variety of phenomena and, as a consequence, reinforcing the jingle, jangle, and reification fallacies in social-psychological research. Due to the bearing this proposition has on the present query, the enunciation of a detailed treatment will be furnished in



the succeeding chapters.



FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Substance is defined as that which exists in itself or independently of anything else. For further remarks on this problem see Thilly (1961). One of the distinctive features of early Greek philosophy is its being monistic, seeking to explain its phenomena by means of a single principle. Thus, the ancient philosophical enterprise was orbited in the question of what the primary substance was. One of the philosophical dilemmas that received much attention was the relationship between a bodily substance and a spiritual substance. Descartes, Spinoza and others resolved the problem by resorting to the interactional assumption of psycho-physical parallelism. Hume, as was discussed, posited that "we have no idea of anything but a perception," and, therefore, the idea of substance, spiritual or material is meaningless. It is worth noting in this context that both humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism are, like early Greek philosophical pursuits, monistic; the first in terms of the principle of self-actualization and the latter with respect to the attribute of the subjecthood-objecthood of the "self" that terminates in the "definition of the situation."

<sup>2</sup> For the direct quotation see, H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, Oxford, The Clarendon Press (1940: 5-6).

<sup>3</sup> Similar to Hume's position, and as was seen in Chapter II, behaviorism does not attempt to deny the existence of mentalistic phenomena or conceptions, but places the emphasis on what is publicly observable. The problem becomes one of empirical corroboration with reference to the accessibility of the data studied.

<sup>4</sup> The conceptualization of the "self" as an integrating agent is shared by many contemporary humanistic theorists. Sherif and Sherif (1969: 384) state that "self or ego is among the terms that came to the foreground during this upsurge of seeking integrative concepts and formulations." Allport (1965) and Buhler (1968) express similar views.

<sup>5</sup> It is instructive to remark in passing that the concept of the "self" and the "soul" are used interchangeably in Bahm's article. Since this confusion is not unusual in the writings of modern "self-theorists," it will be clearly delineated in Chapters VI and VII.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISTS

#### I. James

The preceding philosophic overview has marked the focus of the present thesis, a thesis which holds that the idea of a "self" as an inner agent might have become a vacuous explanatory category, irrespective of the great number of its contemporary exponents and its flourishing popularity. The development of such a proposal demands an exposition of the theoretical background of the "self" since it was introduced into the social-psychological field as a scientific concept.

As a prefatory statement, it should be indicated that psychology, as a science, began with the analysis of personal experience or states of consciousness or awareness as revealed in introspection. According to Wundt and other early experimentalists "the notion of self referred to the person's experience of his body-self-feeling or self-awareness was primarily awareness of muscle tension or other internal states" (Gergen, 1971: 6). Abandonment of this restricted view of the "self" was undertaken by William James whose contribution to the present inquiry is reflected in his discussion of the "stream of consciousness" and "the consciousness of the self" (James, 1950: v. 1).

#### A. "The Stream of Consciousness"

States of awareness or consciousness refer to such things as sensations, desires, emotions, cognitions, reasonings, decisions, volitions etc... (Knight, 1954). In James' opinion, the fundamental



"fact," "which everyone will affirm to belong to his inner experience is the fact that consciousness of some sort goes" (Knight, 1954: 86).

There exist four characteristics of consciousness. These are:

1. Every state is part of a personal consciousness. As an axiom of this principle, James adds that the only states of consciousness naturally dealt with are those "found in personal consciousness, minds, selves, concrete particular I's and You's" (James, 1892: 153). The elementary psychic "fact," in James' view, is that every thought is being owned and is entertained in the phrase "my thought."

"Everyone will recognize this to be true, so long as the existence of something corresponding to the term 'personal mind' is all that is insisted on, without any particular view of its nature being implied. On these terms the personal self rather than the thought might be treated as the immediate datum of psychology. The universal conscious fact is not feelings and thoughts exist, but 'I think' and 'I feel.' No psychology at any rate, can question the existence of personal selves. Thoughts connected as we feel them to be connected are what we mean by personal selves" (James, 1950: 226).

It is interesting to take note of some controversial viewpoints expressed in this quotation. James is striving to surmount the problematic issues entangled in the postulation of the "self" as an inner agent of personal consciousness, "minds," "selves," etc... Furthermore, he forcefully tries to establish the verifiability of his concept of "personal selves" in terms of the subjective feeling of a connection or continuity that actually exists among single or fragmented thoughts or states of awareness. Although "stream of consciousness" is posited as the primary concept, still the emphasis



on "I feel" and "I think" forces one to draw some basic similarities between "the stream of consciousness" and the Cartesian "I." In addition, one has to remember that the humanistic-behavioristic confrontation as it stands in the social sciences is not over the existence or nonexistence of "personal selves" or "minds," but rather over the knowledge of their basic nature (what was referred to in Chapter III as the subjecthood of the self) for which James does not offer any specification ("without any view of its nature being implied").

2. Consciousness is in a constant change. This means that "no state once gone can recur and be identical with what it was before." That is, the same things are perceived differently under different conditions and considerations. James attaches great theoretical importance to his proposition that no two ideas are every exactly the same because it runs counter to the associationistic school that believes in the formulation of "mental facts" in an atomistic fashion and deals with higher states of consciousness as if they were all constituted of unchanging simple ideas. James compellingly states his stand on the issue:

"A permanently existing 'idea' which makes its appearance before the footlights of consciousness at periodical intervals is as mythological an entity as the Jack of Spades" (James, 1892: 157).

3. Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous. By continuous James means "that which is without a breach, crack, or division" (James, 1892: 15). This proposition has two implications:

a. That even where there is a time-gap (in the stream of



consciousness) the consciousness after it feels as if it belonged together with the consciousness before it, as another part of the same self. (Emphasis supplied.)

b. That the changes from one moment to another in the states of consciousness are never absolutely abrupt (James, 1892: 158).

The first implication hinges on the assertion that past states of consciousness are received and owned by present mental states. Both states, moreover, belong together in "a common self."

"This community of self is what the time-gap cannot break in twain, and is why a present thought, although not ignorant of the time-gap, can still regard itself as continuous with certain chosen portions" (James, 1892: 159).

As a consequence of this unifying "same self" or "community of self," James postulates his basic proposition that consciousness is not disjointed or "chopped up into bits," but it "flows" like a river. (You cannot step twice into the same river, Heraclitus said!)

"In talking of it thereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, consciousness, or of subjective life" (James, 1892: 159).

The second implication assumes continuity between past and present states of consciousness, "... and it would be difficult to find in the actual concrete consciousness of a man a feeling so limited to the present as not to have an inkling of anything that went before" (James, 1892: 160).

Both propositions could be related to man's capacity to function on a conceptual level, an endowment that was thereafter fully utilized by Mead who, as a result, bestowed upon man uniqueness in the animal



kingdom describing him as a special kind of actor.

4. "Substantive" and "transitive" states of mind. James says that the parts of the stream of consciousness have different paces. The mind is assumed to have two types of states:

- a. Substantive.
- b. Transitive.

The major function of the transitive states is to lead from one substantive conclusion to another.

James' discussion of the stream of consciousness and the concomitant "facts" about it paves the way to his exquisite discussion of the "self."

#### B. "The Consciousness of the Self"

It is said (Knight, 1954) that the "self" is a highly ambiguous term used by both philosophers and psychologists (sociologists, anthropologists, psychiatrists, theologians, etc., should be added to the list) in a confusing variety of ways. James' classification of the "self," however, is seen as a useful service for the succeeding developments in self-theory. James argues that regardless of what an individual is thinking, he is at the same time aware of himself or of his personal existence.

The "total self," in James opinion, has two distinguishing aspects:

1. The "Me" or the "self as known," or "the empirical ego."
2. The "I," "the self as knower," or "pure ego."



C. "Me": The Self as Known

The constituents of the "Me" are made up of three classes:

1. The material "Me."
2. The social "Me."
3. The spiritual "Me."

The Material "Me": It is the sum total of all that a person calls his. Examples of the material "Me" are one's body, clothes, family, home.<sup>1</sup>

The Social "Me": "It is the recognition which one gets from his mates" (James, 1892: 179). James suggests that we have "an innate propensity to get ourselves noticed and noticed favourably by our kinds" (James, 1892: 179). He, moreover, proposes that a person has as many social selves as there are individuals or groups who offer him recognition and about whose opinions he cares. Examples of social selves are a man's fame or honour.

The Spiritual "Me": James means by this concept the entire collection of a person's states of consciousness, psychic faculties and dispositions concretely considered. The centrality of this part of the "self" is exceedingly marvelled by James.

"When we think of ourselves as thinkers, all the other ingredients of our Me seem relatively external possession. Even within the spiritual Me some ingredients seem more external than others. The very core and nucleus of our self, as we know it, the very sanctuary of our life, is the sense of activity which certain inner states possess. This sense of activity is often held to be a direct revelation of the living substance of our Soul" (James, 1892: 181).

James extends his theory of the "Me" in view of what he calls "the hierarchy of the Me's." With respect to this viewpoint, the "spiritual



"Me" occupies the top of the hierarchy; the extra-corporeal material selves and the various social selves are lodged in the middle; and the "bodily Me" takes up the bottom.<sup>2</sup>

D. The "I": The Self as Knower, Pure Ego

James defines this part of the "self" as that which is at any given moment conscious. In other words, he adds, it is the "Thinker" which is different from the transitory states of consciousness and that is always the same "permanent substance," "Agent," "Transcendental Ego," or "spirit" (James, 1892: 195-196).

The "Thinker," "Pure Self" or "Inner Principle of Personal Unity" is discussed by James through the three major philosophical theories: The spiritualist, associationist and transcendental. Due to the special influence the spiritualist theory had in early social thought and also to James' vigorous stature as conveyed in his discussion of it, the spiritualist theory will be briefly presented.

E. "The Spiritualist Theory of the Soul"

This theory declares that the principle of individuality within a person must be a substantial agent; what is traditionally called the "soul." It exists as a single spiritual substance in which the various psychic faculties, operations, and affections inhere.

The substantialist view of the soul, James thinks, is essentially the view of Plato and Aristotle and other successors such as Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Leibnitz, and Berkley. James' stand regarding it is explicitly communicated. He maintains that it is at



all events needless for expressing the actual subjective phenomena of consciousness as they appear and that he has formulated them all, without its assistance, by the supposition of the stream of thought. He also adds that the unity, identity, immateriality that appear in psychic life are accounted for as phenomenal and temporal "facts" exclusively, requiring no reference to any more simple or substantial agents other than the stream of consciousness. Since by thought, James means something behind the present "Thought" or some type of substance existing on a non-phenomenal level, his conclusion is unhesitatingly expressed:

"Altogether, the Soul is an outbirth of that sort of philosophizing whose great maxim, according to Dr. Hodgson, is: Whatever you are totally ignorant of, assert to be the explanation of everything else... My final conclusion, then about the substantial Soul is that it explains nothing and guarantees nothing" (James, 1950: 347, 350).<sup>3</sup>

In retrospect, it can be said that James' treatment of the problem of the "self" as an agent was ambiguously circumvented by his postulate of the stream of consciousness. Although he fully admits the ineffectiveness of indulging in metaphysical disputes, his concept of the stream of consciousness, however, leaves many questions lacking empirical corroboration. Thus, his psychology is characterized by:

1. The lack of experimentally verified data.
2. An emphasis on intellectual independence and individualism.
3. An archaic stress on out-dated concepts such as "instinctive preferences," "blind impulses," "innate propensity."<sup>4</sup>
4. A philosophical quality.



5. The prominence of the assumption that the subject matter of psychology is consciousness, with everything else following from this axiom (Gilbert, 1962).

These characteristics of the psychology of James were rejected by the later movements of behaviorism and neo-behaviorism that shaped the character of modern North American psychology as relentlessly empirical, descriptive, anti-theoretical, and anti-phenomenological. Perhaps there is a germ of truth or credibility in Gilbert's (1962) observation that "modern psychology did not evolve in an orderly fashion out of its antecedents, as was the case with the other sciences; it was not the child of evolution, but rather of revolution - rebellion against those philosophical antecedents which gave it birth and nurtured it in its infancy" (Gilbert, 1962: 92).

In short, psychology, after the Watsonian revolt of 1913, patterned itself as a science of behavior with a stress on the objectification of the behavior of organisms. In its zest to gain a prestigious scientific status, psychology discarded mentalistic explanatory concepts and hence lost its "soul."

"By the majestically immaterial phenomena of consciousness the Behaviorists were as embarrassed as a group of slightly inebriated men carrying the insensible form of one of their companions across a fashionable hotel lobby" (Gilbert, 1962: 93).

In any event, the pressing contemporary argument is that psychology should redirect its pursuits in order to regain its "soul." The optimism of some social theorists in connection with this demand has already prevailed. Bergin (1964), for instance, proclaims that "the zeitgeist appears to be again on the march toward the re-inclusion



of the subjective within the explicit framework of psychology" (Bergin, 1964: 98). (See also Boshier, 1970; Burt, 1970; Feigl, 1959; Hebb, 1960; Koch, 1959; and Van Kaam, 1970.) In support of Bergin's proclamation, Nisbet (1972) would agree that "a spectre is haunting the contemporary mind: the spectre of consciousness. In so many ways, it is now clear, this is what the culture of the 1950's and then the 1960's was about: the self."

A critical evaluation of this trend of returning to the "great issues" (Bergin, 1964) or "the battle over the image of man" (Friedman, 1962) will be deferred until the contributions of other early theorists are reviewed. One of the most influential figures after James is Charles Horton Cooley.

## II. Charles Horton Cooley: Introductory Remarks

According to George Herbert Mead, the superiority of Cooley's position over James' lies in the latter's conception of consciousness as a dynamic social process within which the "self" and other arise. Mead's assertion reflects the roots of what is labelled as Cooley's symbolic interactionist approach.

Within the Cooleyan paradigm, "the imaginations which people have of one another are the solid facts of society." Their observation and interpretation must be the chief aim of sociology. In other terms, Cooley is professing, like James, that the subject matter of sociology is basically subjective or phenomenological. While James speaks of "personal selves," Cooley uses "personal ideas" (self defined as ideas or imaginations people have of each other). The



articulation of the subjective seems to have been more successfully accomplished by Cooley. For instance, consciousness is distinguished at three levels:

1. Self-consciousness: What I think of myself.
2. Social-consciousness: What I think of other people.
3. Public-consciousness: Is the shared understanding or connection of one's social ideas with those of others.

A. "Social Self"

Due to the vital significance of the "self" in Cooley, a brief survey of his theoretical analysis of this concept is in order.

By the word "self" Cooley says that he means "simply that which is designated in common speech by the pronouns of the first person singular, 'I,' 'me,' 'my,' 'mine,' and 'myself'." In other terms, he pronounces that his reference is to the "empirical self, the self that can be apprehended or verified by ordinary observation" (Cooley, 1964: 168). The distinctive feeling associated with the first pronouns is designated by Cooley as "my-feeling," or "sense of appropriation." This "self-feeling" is an inseparable part of the "I," or "self" and constitutes an experiential test of the "self."

"There can be no final test of the self except the way we feel; it is that toward which we have 'my attitude'" (Cooley, 1964: 172).

In accordance with James' emphasis on the "spiritual me," Cooley remarks that "the verifiable I" refers chiefly to opinions, purposes, desires, claims and the like, concerning matters that involve no thought of body" (Cooley, 1964: 174-175). His doctrine of the "self"



and others is entrenched in consciousness. It is visualized as the ideas entertained by others of the person and the "other" as ideas entertained of him by the "self." The mind becomes the locus of selves that act upon and influence each other. Hence, emerges Cooley's view of the interaction of ideas (others of the "self" and the "self" of others) within the mind. One can, as a consequence, declare that Cooley's methodological approach for the study of the "solid facts of society" is introspective and empathetic. Furthermore, the problem of the objectification of the mind is disregarded by Cooley as metaphysical (Mead, 1964: XXXIV).

Interestingly enough, one should comment in connection with the last point that James, Cooley, Mead and other subjectivist theorists attempt to push aside certain questions as metaphysical whenever they become trapped with questions that are primarily philosophical in nature. The hard "reality" of the matter is that these theorists are placed in a "double-bind" as a result of working simultaneously in two domains, the scientific-empirical and the philosophical, but claiming to advocate the first. Thence, the subjectivist theorists' critique of the behavioristic disregard or denial of mentalistic concepts (against which the subjectivists are revolting) is not dissimilar to their rejection of some questions that are categorized as "metaphysical." All in all, both schools seem to have their "waste-basket" terms into which they throw certain unanswerable questions.

Ultimately, Cooley's view of the "self" is described as "any idea, or system of ideas drawn, from communicative life, that the mind cherishes as its own" (Cooley, 1964: 179). The phrase "communicative



"life" connotes an intended emphasis on the phenomena of language and the social nature of the "self" as "something not separate from general life" (Cooley, 1964: 181). The social orbit within which the "self" is generated is an attitude or "somewhat definite imagination of how one's self -- that is any idea he appropriates -- appears in a particular mind." It is the "other's" mind that is portrayed by Cooley as a reflecting mirror through which the individual perceives himself. Henceforth, Cooley postulates his celebrated proposition of the "looking-glass self" that is based on a triadic relationship:

"... So in imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on and are affected by it. A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance; and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification" (Cooley, 1964: 184).

The two outstanding assumptions that permeate Cooley's work can be seen in the above quotation. First, "mind" is social. Secondly, society is mental. To put it in a nutshell, Cooley believes that "each of us has a different society peopled by those of whom he has mental images" (Angell, 1968: 4). The central feature becomes not what people are, but what one thinks they are. It is this belief that allegedly determines one's responses to them. It is through the medium of this interpretive process and interactional encounters with one's primary groups that Cooley struggles to bridge the gap between the individual level and the societal level. To put it in Parsonian terms: Cooley is a theorist of society as part of the individual "self" (Parsons, 1968: 66). Introspection and sympathetic understanding



of the minds of other individuals or actors are the appropriate methods selected by Cooley for the analysis of social behavior.

In connection with the present discussion, it is worth bringing out at this point Mead's own criticism of the second assumption. It is vulnerable to the charge of postulating a non-existent metaphysical entity called "group mind" (Mead, 1964; Parsons, 1968).

"The locus of society is not in the mind, in the sense in which Cooley uses the term, and the approach to it is not by introspection, though what goes on in the inner forum of our experience is essential to meaningful communication... Whether this account of the appearance of selves be correct or not, it is evident that the acceptance by the sociologist of a society of selves in advance of inner experience opens the door to an analysis which is behavioristic" (Mead, 1964: XXXVI).

It is Mead's verdict that Cooley's assumption of the psychical nature of society, in addition to its predicating certain normal social order and process as given, is scientifically barren. Mead's contribution beyond Cooley's is expressed in a question form that yields the mind itself as a product of social interaction:

"Do the self and others lie within the mind, or is the mind itself, as psychical, a phase of experience that is an outgrowth of primitive human communication?

An elaboration of this Meadian posture will be dealt with independently when discussing Mead's own writings. A quick reference to Cooley's understanding of the character and function of the social sciences will now be made since it has relevance to his mentalistic assumption about the nature of society.

B. "The Dramatic Character of the Sciences of Life"<sup>5</sup>

Cooley believes that a real study of society must be a study of



a process. In view of the fact that the investigator himself, through sympathetic participation, is a conscious part of the process, Cooley assigns a special, unique character for the social sciences.

"I should say that it (the consciousness of the researcher) puts these studies in a class by themselves: Whether you call them sciences or something else is of no great importance. It is their unique privilege to approach life from the point of view of conscious and familiar partaking of it. This involves unique methods which must be worked out independently" (Cooley, 1966: 397).

In this quotation, Cooley is stating distinctly the present predicament of the social sciences and the search for a particular type of methodology that is befitting what the humanistic psychologists and the symbolic interactionists characterize as the "dignity of man." Uniqueness is expressed at two levels:

1. The uniqueness of the subject matter, i.e. man with his potentialities, dignity, and all the positive attributes that endow him with a special status.

2. The uniqueness of a science that studies this subject matter, i.e. studies man with adorable devotion to his inner experience as primary rather than his observable behavior.

Cooley is one of the pioneers preoccupied with a search for a "humanistic methodology," such as was described in Chapter II. He affirms that "... each branch of science must be worked out in its own way, which is mainly to be found in actual search for truth rather than by a priori methodology." This is not basically different in any sense from what the humanistic theorists are proposing: A humanistic science that is task-oriented instead of procedure-oriented. The



point under consideration here is one of the most crucial issues in the ongoing behavioristic-humanistic confrontation. Sargent (1967) succinctly formulates it:

"In many ways the crux of the issue between the humanistically inclined and other psychologists is methodological. The former tend to be problem-oriented; the latter are technique-oriented in that they stick to one or two research techniques and have little use for others" (Sargent, 1967: 129).

It is the present author's opinion that while the confrontation between the humanistic theorists and their antagonists is frequently depicted as methodological, the underlying disputes are philosophical. As we have seen, the discordance pertains to the ancient philosophical question about the basic nature of man. Contemporary answers to this question are still as uncomfortable as the pre-Platonic ones. They represent divergent opinions and standpoints, bolstered by little empirical evidence.

In spite of his humanistic aspirations, Cooley is more consistent in his conceptualizations of the nature and ideals of a "social science" than any of his later followers. This statement is supported by two observations about him:

1. As was mentioned earlier, he did not insist on calling "studies of social life" that use "sympathetic participation" as sciences; "whether you call them sciences or something else is of no great importance."

2. He did not try to separate sociology from other closely associated disciplines. Thus, he argues that "to attempt to build sociology as a technical tradition remote from the great currents of



literature and philosophy, would, in my opinion, be a fatal error. It cannot avoid being difficult, but should be as abstruse as possible. If it is not human, it is nothing." (Emphasis supplied.) In other words, Cooley would prefer to regard the social sciences, sociology in particular, as human disciplines rather than scientific enterprises accredited with the pretension of prediction and the arrogance of control. In this respect, he is different from other humanistic and symbolic interactionist theorists who, as Wylie (1968) observed, want to have their cake and eat it too, i.e. be humanistic and scientific at the same time.

Parsons (1968) credits Cooley with following a breakthrough initiated by James. Its major ambition was to disencumber the social sciences from the theoretical rigidities of the Cartesian tradition by providing a frame of reference that takes not only the "external world," or society, but also the "self" as an object. To both James and Cooley, this relationship between the social environment and the "self" is an "empirical" one confirmable through introspection or self-observation. This critical issue of the subjecthood-objecthood of the "self" was further expanded by George Herbert Mead who combined philosophical and sociological perspectives and who stretched the relationship into a higher level of analytical sophistication.

### III. George Herbert Mead

Mead's reputable criticism of Cooley's mentalistic assumption about the essence of society was delivered previously. His remedy of the problematic aspects was the presupposition of the prior existence



of society to the individual, an assumption he views as scientifically more profitable. In this fashion, he evaded the philosophical question of which came first, the individual or society, and consequently devoted his efforts to the distinctive task of explaining how society "gets into" the individual. His primary preoccupation was to expound the genesis of "mind" and "self" as products of social interaction. By adopting what he described as a "socio-behavioristic" approach, he sought the fulfillment of this enterprise. Besides, he himself insisted on the productivity of this approach as contrasted with Watson's "objective-behavioristic" approach. The contrast is somewhat enlightening.

A. Mead's Social Behaviorism Versus Watsonian Objective Behaviorism

Mead, describing himself as a social behaviorist, criticized Watsonian behaviorism as reductionistic and oversimplified. Before contrasting the two kinds of behaviorism, it is worth mentioning that Watsonian or objective behaviorism came as a reaction to "structuralism" and "functionalism." Therefore, in order to comprehend what Watson was revolting against, the objective of these two schools of psychology will be very briefly presented. According to the "School of Structuralism," the subject matter of psychology is conscious experience as arrived at by introspection or self-observation. Functionalism, on the other hand, held that psychology is the study of mental activity and its functional aspect in terms of a give-and-take relation with the environment. Watson revolted against these two



schools of psychology contending that the mentalistic conceptions of such a science, such as mind, consciousness, images, etc... are carryovers from mental philosophy. As a result, he dispensed with (not necessarily denied) private experience and reduced psychology into a stimulus-response relationship.

The following are some important points of contrast between Mead and Watson:

1. For Watson, private experience is outside the realm of science. He did not deny its existence as such. Mead's behaviorism attempts to include the private neglected aspect of the individual's experience and adopts an "experiential" approach to the study of man.

2. Watson views language from the perspective of the conditioning paradigm reducing it into the movement of the muscles of the vocal cord, i.e. language to him is a "laryngeal habit." Mead, on the other side, conceives of language as an "objective" phenomenon within a social group. Reflexiveness, to him, is a characteristic human capacity.

3. Watson solved the mind-body problem by doing away with mind as a special faculty or apparatus. Mead, in contrast, disputes that if one accepts the presupposition of regarding the social process of experience as prior to the existence of mind, then one will be able to explain not only the origin of minds but also their interaction.

4. For Watson the individual's experience is reduced to a response defined in objective, observable terms. Mead, on the other hand, defines the response experientially or phenomenologically.



In summary, regardless of Mead's claims, his methodological orientation converges, in the final analysis, with that of Watson. Thus, Watson probably would consent to Mead's definition of psychology as:

"... Not something that deals with consciousness; psychology deals with the experience of the individual in its relation to the conditions under which the experience goes on. It is social psychology where the conditions are social ones. It is behavioristic where the approach to experience is made through conduct" (Petras, 1968: 4; Morris, 1967: 40-41).

Watson would, in addition, definitely approve of Morris's comment on this particular quotation:

"... A great deal that appears simply as experience of the individual, as his sensation or perception, becomes public later... Every discovery as such begins with experiences which have to be stated in terms of the biography of the discoverer. He works out hypotheses and tests them and they become common property thereafter. That is, there is a close relationship between these two fields of the psychical and the physical, the private and the public. We make distinction between these, recognizing that the same factor may now be only private and yet later may become public" (Morris, 1967: 41).

Within the Watsonian paradigm, the conditions can be objectively specified in a number of concepts and variables whose generality includes all sectors of behavior, human and animal. The biography of the individual becomes his previous reinforcement and conditioning. Mead's definition of the "act" will not then be introduced as: "... a stimulus and a response on the basis of an inner condition which sensitizes the system to the stimulus and quickens the response" (Petras, 1968: 6-7), but will be accentuated and delimited to a response that is controlled by the manipulation of external variables



or stimuli because of their accessibility. The issue here can be phrased within the historical context of learning theory: Watson is arguing for a stimulus-response theory, while Mead is sponsoring a specific version of the S-O-R theory, that narrows down the inner conditions to the primacy of possessing a "self." An inconsistency in Mead's reasoning becomes apparent. On the one hand, he accepts the behavioristic strategy of studying experience through behavior (giving eminence to the prevailing conditions) and the premise that private experiences become public at a later phase. On the other hand, he appears to impute uniqueness to the inner conditions especially with reference to the reflexivity of the "self."

The ambiguities inherent in his theorizing will be spelled out after summarizing the major components of his system: language, mind, self, and society.<sup>6</sup>

#### B. The Role of Language in the Meadian System

Mead assumes that mind and self are an outcome of social interaction and communication. According to him, interaction and communication on a non-verbal level precede the development of language, which is a unique human quality. The development of language presupposes a biologically given potentiality. As a consequence, the true and meaningful human social interaction is accomplished through language. Mind and self develop or emerge only through this kind of interaction. To put it differently, human interaction is carried out on a conceptual level. This has two implications:

1. As a result of having a conceptual level, the individual



makes reference to the generic class to which the persons, objects, events or relationships belong. For instance, the word "cup" or "dog" comes to refer to all cups or dogs respectively.

2. It is not necessary for the individual to have direct first-hand experience with all aspects of the social or physical environment, i.e. his experience and behavior become possible or regulated with relation to the situation or persons that are not immediately present (Sherif and Sherif, 1956).

#### C. The Problem of Mind (Consciousness) in Mead's System

Mead postulates a functional theory of the mind, which is defined in terms of its behavioral manifestations, and exists not as a structure but in a field of conduct, functioning to establish stable relationships between the individual and his environment. It "uses previous experience to determine the nature of the stimulus attended to" (Petras, 1968: 4). Gestural communication, which is preliminary to the development of the mind, has a functional aspect too. Thus, Mead contends that a gesture becomes a significant symbol when it evokes a response in the person making it identical to the response it evokes in the other responding individual. This is essentially achieved in the social process through verbal or vocal interaction or communication. By projecting one's self into a situation where the response of the other individual is imagined or predicted, the responding individual can modify his behavior accordingly. This acquisition of the meaning of the other person's attitude or tendency to act as the other person acts is what Mead calls "thought." Implied in this process of



thinking or meaning is a triadic relationship:

1. A significant symbol of one individual.
2. A response to this symbol by another individual.
3. The completion of a "social act" initiated or evoked by this symbol.

To sum up, Mead believes that mentality consists of controlling and selecting appropriate responses from the social environment. Mind or thinking is a social process through which the meaning of the responses of the other individual is perceived by the individual himself. Inherent in all of this is a process of reflexivity, a social process, and a process of verbal or vocal interaction in the form of significant symbols.

#### D. The "Self" in Mead's System

The "self," just like the mind, is a product of social interaction, according to Mead. One unsurpassed characteristic of the "self" is that it is an object to itself, i.e. the principle of reflexivity. Accordingly, it can be both a subject and an object to itself. The individual's experience of his selfhood as an object to himself is achieved indirectly by means of taking the role of the other individuals who are involved in the social interaction toward himself, and also through the emergence of "self-consciousness or awareness." Mead speaks of elementary selves, stating that: "We divide ourselves up in all sorts of different selves with reference to our acquaintances. We discuss politics with one and religion with another. There are all sorts of different selves answering to all sorts of different social



reactions" (Morris, 1967: 142). The correspondence of this to James' "pluralism of selves" is very obvious.

The genesis of the "self" follows three stages:

1. Preparatory stage: this stage is not mentioned clearly by Mead. It is an imitative stage during which the individual starts attempting to take the roles of the other (Manis and Meltzer, 1967; Morris, 1965).

2. Play stage: actual role taking, such as the role of being a father, a postman, or a policeman, etc..., starts. The individual here learns to play a specific role. The initial stages in the formation of the "self" begins.

3. Game stage: the child starts taking multiplicity of roles at the same time culminating in the emergence of a generalized expectation of the significant key others. He has to abstract or extract a definite relationship or organization among these roles. The attitude of the whole community is designated by Mead as the "generalized other."

The totality of the "self" has two distinguishable parts, the "I" and the "Me." (The similarity to James' conception of the components of the "self" is very evident.) The "I" is the impulsive, spontaneous, and creative part of the "self." The response of the "I" is uncertain in the sense that one's actions are not completely subject to collective determinism. The "Me" is the conventional part of the "self." It is a symbolization of the internalized or incorporated others within the individual.



#### E. Society in the Meadian System

One of the basic assumptions of Mead when treating the emergence of mind and self was the prior existence of society to the individual. The task he undertook was to show how society "gets into" the individual.

He distinguishes between subhuman or infrahuman society and human society. In infrahuman society, behavior is essentially physiologically determined. There is no stability and consistency in the interrelationships among members of such a society. In direct contrast to this is the social behavior in human societies which cannot be explained merely in physiological terms because it involves intentional, meaningful, and symbolic interaction on two levels:

1. Understanding the intention of the stimulation of others, i.e. others as stimuli.

2. Responding to these intentions, i.e. "self" as a response to the stimulation of others.

One challenging and provocative undertaking of Mead, when discussing society, is his assertion that social change or reconstruction should imply a parallel reconstruction of the "self" or personality:

"Social reconstruction by the individual members of any organized human society entails self or personality reconstruction in some degree or other by each of these individuals, and vice versa"  
(Strauss, 1965: 270).

To recapitulate, the social-psychological implications of the Meadian perspective were elaborately derived by Herbert Blumer (1969a) who claims to be the contemporary spokesman for Mead in particular and



symbolic interactionism in general. He affirms that the thoughtways of George Herbert Mead have revolutionized the social sciences by their recognition that the human being is a "self." (To phrase this assertion in Platonic terms one can say that the essence of man is the self!) The possession of a "self," in other words, confers upon man a special status that is directly opposite to the dominant model of man in the current social sciences. Within this symbolic interactionist model, man is no longer viewed as a captive of the impinging external stimulus field, but as an active actor who shapes his own behavior and defines the world he confronts.

"In short, the possession of a self provides the human being with a mechanism for self-interaction with which to meet the world - a mechanism that is used in forming and guiding his conduct... In introducing the self, Mead's position focuses on how human beings handle and fashion their world, not on disparate responses to imputed factors" (Blumer, 1969b: 235-241).

As a result of this exalted view that makes the individual a society in miniature, Mead ends up being a good example of the type of scientists who desire to have their cake and eat it too. While his scheme attests to be empirical and socio-behavioristic on the one hand, it remains highly intuitive on the other hand. Meltzer's (1967) observation that his orientation is basically philosophical has a substantial validity.

In his critique of Mead's social psychology, Meltzer (1967) pinpoints the ambiguity inherent in the Meadian system. The vagueness in conceptualization is attributed to two major sources:

1. The fragmentary and alternative formulations of Mead's thoughts.
2. The assumption of novelty of human behavior, on the one



side, and the continuity of infrahuman and human behavior on the other side.

Meltzer lists several examples in support of these two sources of inconsistency in Mead's posture. Suffice it to mention only two illustrations that are of high pertinence to the present thesis.

1. The concept of the "I" is sloppily defined in a manner that relinquishes it as a residual category which includes everything from the biological drives to the changing patterns of the individual's life history. It is needless to remind, that this "hodgepodge definition" relegates the Meadian "I" as markedly different from the Cartesian one. More important still, is the implication that Mead's extremely broad definition of the "I" "as the spontaneous, unpredictable aspect of man's personality" indicates a rejection of societal determinism. While the "Me" part of the "self" implies at least partial collective determinism, the "I" part ultimately supplies the individual with an appreciable degree of freedom to interpret and construe his behavioral roles.

2. "The concept of 'self' also lacks clear, unambiguous definition in Mead's work" (Meltzer, 1967: 21). Most frequently it is defined in terms of the "individual viewing himself as an object." Yet, Mead's emphasis on the reflexivity of the "self" does not enlighten one as to the nature of what "self" is nor put in order the confusion that is heightened by Mead's vacillation between synonymous usages of "self" and "self-consciousness" in one context and different usages of these two terms in another context.

Recent experimental evidence (Gallup, 1970, 1971; Gergen, 1972)



questions the theorizing of Mead and other symbolic interactionists.

In his fascinating experiments on the "self-concept," Gallup (1971) calls attention to the existence of "a rudimentary concept of the self" in chimps; a conclusion that demands a reassessment of the concept as uniquely human.

A second challenge to the symbolic interactionist perspective has been directed by Gergen's recent research on "multiple identity." In this research, Gergen contests the validity of the assumption that is embraced by almost all psychological research on the development of the "self": That a normal socialization process equips the individual with a stable and coherent sense of identity or "self." Gergen's research endorses the abandonment of this assumption and confirms the Jamesian hypothesis that "a man has as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares."<sup>7</sup> This conclusion points to an inconsistency which exists in the works of the three theorists discussed. That is, while they foster the conception of the "pluralism of selves," they also struggle to postulate a unified sense of "self." The central question here is: How could the unity and structure of the complete "self," which the symbolic interactionists propose, be explained in terms of the unity and organization of elementary selves? A complementary question is posited by Gergen (1972): "Was there such an entity - or was I simply a chameleon, reflecting others' views of me" (Gergen, 1972: 31)? A further discussion of the symbolic interactionist perspective will be provided in the form of concluding remarks on the three theorists presented and on symbolic interactionism in general.



#### IV. Symbolic Interactionism: Premises and Promises

It is Parsons' (1968) evaluation that Cooley has followed up a breakthrough that was championed by James and that deviated from the Cartesian tradition (which was essentially philosophical than anything else). For Parsons, "Cooley was a theorist of society as part of the individual self" (Parsons, 1968: 66). Although he exploited the Jamesian initiative, he did not develop it fully, a task that was executed by Mead. The focal question at this junction becomes: What is James' major innovation and, consequently, his influence on both Cooley and Mead? The answer to the first part of the question is given in two contributions of James:

1. James stretched the Cartesian system by regarding not only the "external world" or society but also the "self" as an object.

2. James introduced his crucial conception of the "pluralism of the self."

This conception overcame the rigidity of the Cartesian "I" and cherished the existence of inconsistency in human behavior (Parsons, 1968).

James influence on both Cooley and Mead is obvious with respect to the first's conception of the "looking-glass self" and the latter's emphasis on the reflexiveness of the "self" that underlies the individual's ability to "play the role of the other." In brief, James has promoted the proposition that the individual's perception of himself is fundamentally a function of other people's imagination and conception of him. This proposition was subsequently refined by Cooley and Mead until it was eventually advanced as the ultimate "fact" about



the social nature of man, upon whom a unique status was bestowed. The realization of this "fact" culminated in the direct challenge by the symbolic interactionists of the existing model of man in the contemporary social sciences. This challenge is couched in three premises as discussed by Blumer (1969a).

1. Human beings respond to objects and situations on the basis of the "meanings" these objects evoke.
2. "Meanings" are socially derived.
3. "Meanings" are acted upon by the responding individual.

These three premises erect a glorifying picture of man as an active agent who does not merely respond to external stimulation but who actively partakes in making indications to others and in interpreting their own indications to him. Above all, it is asserted, "he can do this, as Mead has shown so emphatically, only by virtue of possessing a 'self,'" by which "nothing esoteric" is meant except that "a human being can be an object of his own actions." The overemphasis on the reflexiveness of the "self," which is tantamount to all that the symbolic interactionists have contributed toward any analysis of the "self," constitutes an immediate protest against the prevailing philosophy of the social sciences.

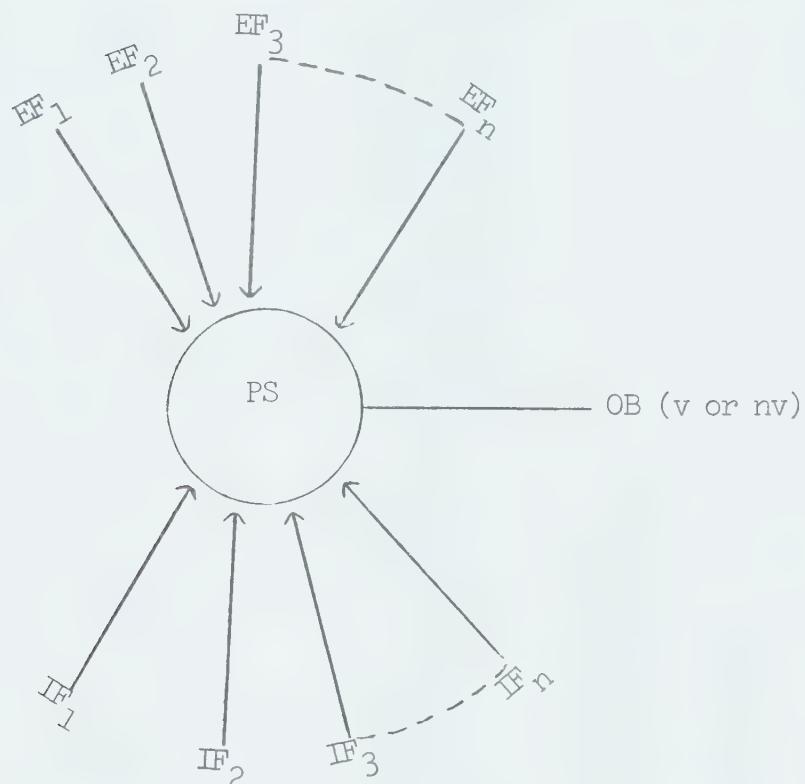
"This view of the human being directing his own action by making indications to himself stands sharply in contrast to the view of human action that dominates current psychological and social science. Action is traced back to such matters as motives, attitudes, need dispositions, unconscious complex stimulus configurations, status demands, role requirement, and situational demands" (Blumer, 1969a: 15).

This protest of symbolic interactionism returns us to the original



conflict that was described in Chapter II: "beyond freedom and dignity" versus "back to freedom and dignity." In a schematic form, the conflict can be portrayed as follows:

Diagram 1  
(An Interactionist Position)

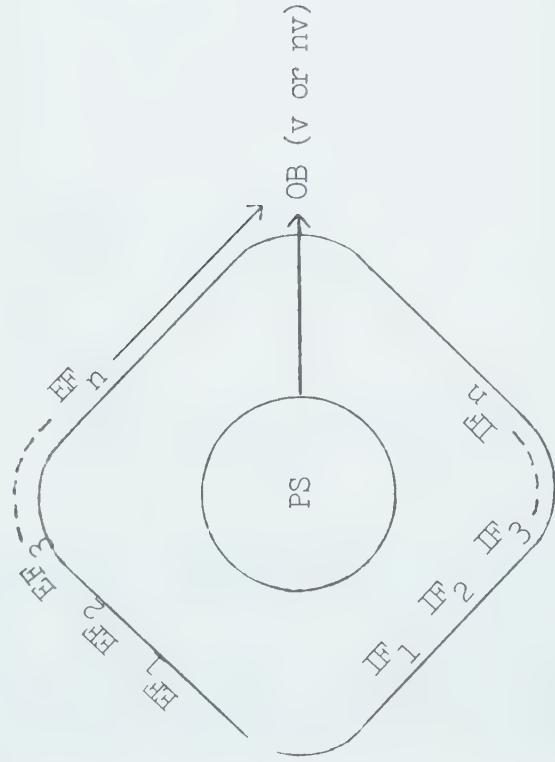


Diagrammatic representation of the frame of reference of an observed behavior at a given time. OB (v or nv): Observed Behavior (verbal or nonverbal). EF: External Factors (objects, persons, groups, cultural products, etc., in the external stimulus situation). IF: Internal Factors: motives, including ego-attitudes, desires, ambitions, emotions, states of the organism (fatigue, being sleepy or tense, etc.); attitudes derived from social norms; language concepts, effects of past experience, etc. PS: Psychological Structuring or patterning.

(Source: Sherif and Sherif, 1969: 32.)



### The Behaviorist Position



(Observed behavior, words and deeds of the person, is a function of external stimulus factors impinging on the organism.)

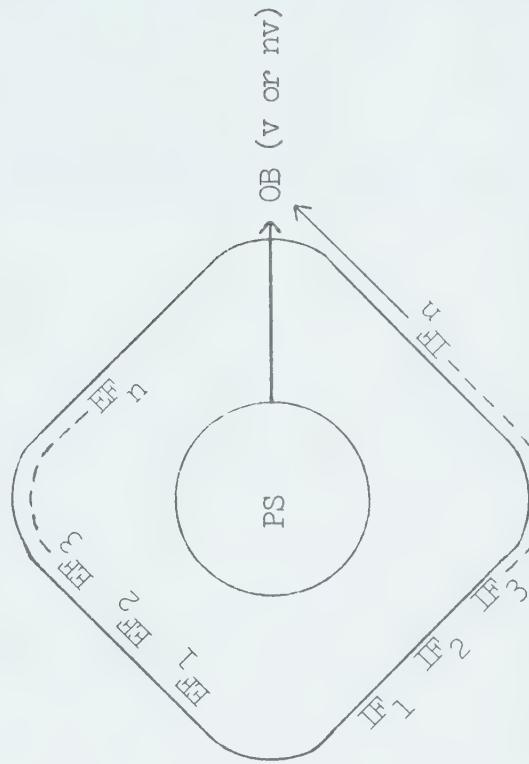
A multiple-choice question:

It has been said that, in one sense, all modern social psychologists are behaviorists. Choose the statement that best indicates in what sense is this true.

- a. they accept S-R reinforcement theory.
- b. internal factors, as well as experience, are inferred from behavior.
- c. concepts of motivation should be excluded from theory which should concern only behavior.
- d. consciousness or awareness should be excluded from theory.

### Diagram 2

### The Humanist or Subjectivist Position



(Observed behavior is a function of internal factors. Experience is primary; behavior a by-product. Furthermore, internal factors are reduced to a single process: self-interaction.)

(Adapted from Sherif and Sherif, 1969: 38.)  
(Also Instructor's Manual, p. 46.)



Based on the preceding diagrams, one can debate that symbolic interactionism is a humanistic perspective that lacks empirical credibility and that constricts its analytical tools to only one concept, the "self," whose definition remains highly ambiguous and extremely general.

Although the three theorists discussed should be credited for their endeavour to transform their basic questions from the metaphysical, transcendental into the experiential realm, their primary concern with the subjective overshadowed their explanatory efforts with unresolvable inconsistencies and unconfirmable, speculative conclusions about man's behavior and basic nature. As was clearly described, the fundamental "fact" for James was "personal consciousness"; for Cooley, the "imagination people have of each other"; and for Mead, "self-interaction." The link that ties these three concerns together is basically the ancient philosophical question that Comte (1969) aptly wrestled with: "How can the individual be at once a cause and a consequence of society?" The abortive answers to this question have already been traced from James' "community of self" through Cooley's "solid facts of society" to Mead's utopian identification with the "society of man."

It is Allport's (1969) judgment that modern social scientists, not less than Comte, are still haunted by the question:

"How can his nature depend indisputably upon the prior existence of cultural designs and upon his role in a predetermined social structure, while at the same time he is clearly a unique person, both selecting and rejecting influences from his cultural surrounding, and in turn creating new cultural forms for the guidance of future generations" (Allport, 1969: 9)?



The symbolic interactionists' answer to this question is anchored in man's selfhood. As it has already been shown, Mead did not pose the question in a metaphysical sense (which came first, the individual or society) but in an empirical manner (society already exists and the problem is to explain how it gets into the individual). Yet, the simultaneous assumption of the subjecthood-objecthood of the "self" offered the symbolic interactionists a vaguely compromising and partially comforting solution: the individual has a spontaneous aspect of the "self," "self" as a knower or the "I," that provides him with the potentiality for creative activity while the conventional aspect of the "self," "self" as known or the "Me," disposes him to conformity and social control. The "self," then, is composed of two components that constitute a dual system of determinacy and indeterminacy (Petras, 1968: 14-15).<sup>8</sup>

In essence, the present discussion concerns the freedom of the individual in symbolic interactionism. It is cautioned (Rose, 1965) that the determination of an individual's "self" by others' expectations should not be taken to mean that the individual himself is a passive bystander. Besides, it is alleged that the plurality of group affiliations that an individual has gives him freedom from social determinism and confronts him with several possible behavioral patterns for his choice.

"Being determined by a large number of diverse groups, the individual is determined by no one of them" (Rose, 1965: 81).

Again, the symbolic interactionists appear to be retreating to the old philosophical issues but spicing them with "scientific" haloes. At



least two of the founders, James and Cooley, reached despair or disappointment with regard to the attainability of a social science. James himself was frustrated with the hope for general social laws similar to those in physics. At the end of his career, he was compelled to admit that psychology has not produced "a single law in the sense in which physics show us... This is no science, it is only the hope for a science" (James, 1968).<sup>9</sup>

Cooley, as was previously mentioned, did not attach paramount importance to the label "science." For him, the social sciences are human disciplines in the first place and, as such, they are inseparable from other humanistic fields or pursuits.

The present discussion, therefore, has bearing on two persistent characteristics of "social science":

1. The search for bridging the gap between the individual and the group approach.<sup>10</sup> The basic question in this context was already pointed out: How can the individual be simultaneously the cause and consequence of society? The conclusion was that present answers to this question are still as unsatisfying as those one would have secured by consulting the oracle of Delphi.

2. The second characteristic is "our easy boredom and slippery change of venue." It is declared (Allport, 1968) that we do not solve our problems; we only grow tired of them. As a result, the plea for new labels commences under the pretext that they will solve the old problems and freshly formulate new ones. Popular concepts are estimated to survive for only about two decades, after which "they begin to taste as flat as yesterday's beer" (Allport, 1968: 33).<sup>11</sup>



The second characteristic has a cardinal link to the problem of the "self" - with its diversity of meanings, multiplicity of usages, and ambiguity of functions. Perhaps the "soul" of yesterday is not dissimilar to the extolled "self" of today. Hence, James's conclusion about the soul (as an outbirth of that sort of philosophizing whose great maxim, according to Dr. Hodgson, is: Whatever you are totally ignorant of, assert to be the explanation of everything else) is also somehow applicable to the concept of "self" as it exists in some of today's socio-psychological theories with their revolutionary allegations.

Two major implications can be drawn. The first implication is derived by Allport (1968). It states that "our conceptual flexibility is greater than our methodological flexibility." In support of this conclusion, Allport cites the example of re-admitting the self-concept into social-psychological theories and research with considerable popularity. In other terms, the existential-humanistic-symbolic outlook is suffering from a methodological lag in the sense that the proponents of this outlook have not been as inventive as their own basic postulates presuppose. One has no reservation to conclude that these postulates themselves are philosophically rooted, a condition that does not surrender them amenable to empirical substantiation or verification. Thus, while the symbolic interactionists have succeeded in incorporating some humanistic considerations at the conceptual-flexibility level they have increased the methodological lag by sacrificing certain primary desiderata that can draw the distinction between scientific and philosophic enterprises.



The second implication focuses on what is called the jingle-jangle fallacy (Hartley, 1967). The first type of fallacy points to the erroneous inference that, if two things are called by the same name or label, then they are the same thing. The second kind of fallacy is the tendency to assume that, if two things are called differently, then they are different. Both types dominate the social-psychological writings about the "self." This will be shown in Chapter VI when dealing with the "derivative meanings of the 'self'."

To conclude, it bears repeating that symbolic interactionism, contrary to what its champions vigorously assert, is not an original outlook on the nature of man. Its roots are as old as the pre-Platonic social philosophy. Its promises are as ancient as the wishes of ancient man to have a feeling of freedom (even if illusory) and an inner sense of revolt against authority, natural and social. Three promises of contemporary symbolic interactionism are held out:

1. An attempt begun but not rigorously followed to free the social sciences from metaphysical ambiguities and philosophical embarrassments. While the social sciences originally flourished on the sponsorship of this goal, the symbolic interactionists seem to have confounded certain philosophical pursuits with scientific ones.

2. A utopian aspiration to liberate the individual from subservience to external stimulation (the behavioristic approach with its mechanistic model of man) or internally stored inhibitions (the psychoanalytic approach with its model of man as a battlefield). Along with this aspired-for liberation exists an emphasis on the goodness and positiveness of man as a pro-active agent that has the



power to shape his own behavior and construct his meaningful engagements with the world.

3. A daring challenge to the existing philosophy of the social sciences with the promise of salvation from a methodology that imposes itself upon the kinds of problems sifted and undermines the "richness of human experience." Science, in this context, becomes nothing more than "the sheer fascination with human mystery and enjoyment of it" (Maslow, 1966: 40) or the "respect" or "adoration" of the human being (Blumer, 1969). Ironically, the implied synonymy between "science" and mythology, art, common sense, and everyday affairs needs no comment.

Since these promises appear to be partly or fully shared by humanistic psychology, three representative figures from this school will be considered.



FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>James' assumption about the generality of the material self as including personal and family possessions has been supported in a study by Cohen (1968). However, James erred in assigning primacy to clothes as part of the material self. See Joseph Cohen, "Personal and family possessions as signs in the identification of self and significant others: A study of their rank order." A paper given at the American Sociological Association, 1968 - Sociological Abstracts, Vol. XVI, supp., (1968), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>The striking similarity between James' "hierarchy of the Me's" and Maslow's "hierarchy of motives" should be pointed out.

<sup>3</sup>This conclusion is in accordance with Skinner's view of the "self" as expressed in at least two of his books: Science and Human Behavior (1953), and Beyond Freedom and Dignity (1971).

<sup>4</sup>The use of these terms was continued by Cooley, e.g. general instinct, instinctive attitude, appropriative instinct of the mind; and Mead, e.g. impulse.

<sup>5</sup>A further discussion of the "problem orientation" versus the "method orientation" as a methodological issue in sociology is available in Rose (1954), Theory and Method in the Social Sciences. Pertinent to this also is Cooley's article "The Roots of Social Knowledge," in Manis and Meltzer (eds.) Symbolic Interaction, (1967).

<sup>6</sup>The same components have been discussed by B.F. Skinner. For a brief contrast consult Appendix I.

<sup>7</sup>A hypothesis which both Cooley and Mead share. The first in viewing the individual's "self" as reflections derived from different significant others; the latter in terms of his conception of elementary selves that is traced back to James.

<sup>8</sup>Cooley's stand on this issue is expounded by Mead in his article "Cooley's Contribution to American Social Thought," in C.H. Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order, (1964).



"The fact for Cooley is that these social ideas and their organization are not representations of a reality lying outside but the 'solid facts of society.' The metaphysical question as to the freedom of will of the individual apart from the social situation that exists in his imagination has no sociological meaning."

<sup>9</sup> The end of James' confessions was more despair than hope for psychology to reach the status of a science of either the general or the unique.

<sup>10</sup> Allport illustrates his point as follows:

"We grow weary of suggestibility and so investigate persuasibility; personality and culture give way to systems theory; the group mind drifts into organizational theory; rationalization becomes cognitive dissonance; friendship masquerades as interpersonal attractiveness; problem-solving dissolves into programming; pleasure and pain become positive and negative reinforcement; maladjustment becomes alienation; volition gives way to decision-making; no longer one possesses character, one has ego strength" (Allport, 1968: 33).



## CHAPTER V

### THE HUMANISTIC THEORISTS

#### I. E. Fromm

Two of the humanistic theorists, Fromm and Rogers, to be discussed in this chapter are ordinarily categorized as both neo-Freudian and humanistic psychologists. Since the first label is older, it is worth hinting to the major connotations it carries. By adopting a neo-Freudian approach both theorists reject Freud's underlying concern about man's libidinal strivings and their repression replacing it by a telling emphasis upon social and environmental determinants of personality. Man in the neo-Freudian scheme becomes a "self-generating" individual capable of attaining an exhilarating level of autonomy, freedom, rationality, responsibility, integrity, love, transcendence and other similar attributes which are viewed as uniquely human. Notwithstanding their renunciation of certain aspects of Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the neo-Freudians still credit him with several major achievements. Aside from his contribution of a tri-partite theory of personality, which is one of the early formulations of self-theory, his primary mission according to Fromm (1959) was the establishment of a movement whose aspiration was the ethical liberation of man and the creation of a new secular and scientific religion for an elite to guide mankind. Although Freud himself had started this movement, the neo-Freudians look upon themselves as the destined missionaries whose devotion is the continuation of this movement



towards its goal. Keeping this in mind helps one to appreciate fully Schaar's (1961) sharp criticism of Fromm. It also introduces Chapter VII which attempts to show how the self became a response to the crisis of values in contemporary western society. Schaar says:

"Thus Fromm has undertaken with missionary intent the 'search into the pathology of civilized communities' which Freud called for in his late works. If Freud is the Moses who showed the people the way out of the Egypt of their passions, Fromm is the aspiring Joshua who would lead them into the promised land of the sane society" (Schaar, 1961: 5).

Embedded in the preceding quotation is the central theme in Fromm's works: that civilization crushes and corrupts man's most basic needs and noblest powers and that the cure for man is to be "himself." Before discussing this conception of being oneself, Fromm's analysis of the human situation will be presented.

In his most celebrated book, Escape From Freedom (1947b), Fromm formulated the thesis that as man has gained more freedom throughout the ages he also felt more alone. Because of a "psychic need" to avoid aloneness, freedom became a negative condition from which he tries to escape. This theme was elaborated further in almost all of his later books, particularly in Man for Himself (1967a) and The Sane Society (1955). The latter contains Fromm's assumptions about the human condition.

"The archimedie point of the specifically human dynamism lies in this uniqueness of the human situation; the understanding of man's psyche must be based on the analysis of man's needs stemming from the conditions of his existence" (Fromm, 1955: 25).



#### A. Man's Basic Needs Explicated

Fromm (1955) postulates five psychic needs stemming from the human situation. These are summarized as follows:

1. The need for relatedness: Man is cut off from his primary ties. Being endowed with reason and imagination, he is aware of his loneliness, powerlessness, and separateness. In order to face this critical situation, man has by necessity to form new ties with his fellow men.

"The necessity to unite with other living beings, to be related to them, is an imperative need on the fulfillment of which man's sanity depends" (Fromm, 1955: 30).

According to Fromm only through "love" can man satisfy his need to unite with the world and at the same time cultivate a sense of integrity and individuality.

"Love is union with somebody or something, outside oneself, under the condition of retaining the separateness and integrity of one's own self" (Fromm, 1955: 31).

2. Need for transcendence: Man is thrown into this universe without his choice as a passive creature. He is not contented with his passive role and, therefore, is driven by the urge to transcend the role of the creature, the accidentalness and passivity of his existence, by becoming a creator. Man, as a "creator," has two alternatives for the satisfaction of this need for transcendence: creation or destruction. Fromm views creation as a primary potentiality and destructiveness as secondary. This contains the seeds of his conception of good and evil (Schaar, 1961). Man becomes evil only when the conditions for the fulfillment of his potentialities are



thwarted. Schaar's conclusion regarding Fromm's utopian view of man is noteworthy:

"Evil as such has no independent existence. It is only the absence of the good or the result of failure to realize the full potential of life, which is the good. Fromm, in short, rejects all dualism in the field of ethics and psychology and asserts that man is basically good" (Schaar, 1961: 50).

3. The need for rootedness: Man is torn away from his natural roots. This severance of man's natural ties is dreadful and can be endured only insofar as man can establish new human roots. Human rootedness can be built on either of two principles: a) incest, i.e. a fixation to one's own blood ties such as the mother, the family, clan, state, nation, church, and b) brotherliness, i.e. the feeling of rootedness in a universal brotherliness which is the affirmation of all others as equally deserving "love" and "justice." This productive form of rootedness transforms man's world "into a truly human home" (Fromm, 1955: 60). (Compare this with Mead's identification with the society of mankind.)

4. The need for a sense of identity: Fromm emphasizes man's self-awareness as part of this need. The vitality of cultivating this notion of "self" as an active subject or inner agent is an unavoidable necessity.

"... he must be able to sense himself as the subject of his actions. As with the need for relatedness, rootedness, and transcendence, this need for a sense of identity is so vital and imperative that man could not remain sane if he did not find some way of satisfying it" (Fromm, 1955: 61).

Fromm deplores the recurring predisposition of most men to seek substitutes for this sense of identity or individuality and hence



immerse themselves in what he calls "herd conformity."

5. The need for a frame of orientation and devotion: This need exists on two levels: a) the need to have some frame of orientation, regardless if it is true or false, and b) the need to grasp the world "objectively" and hence be in touch with "reality." This system of devotion must be "rational" and "objective" reflecting knowledge of nature, society and oneself and consequently gratification and maintenance of man's happiness, sanity, and serenity.

Schaar's (1961) penetrating critique of Fromm's scheme exposes its logical and terminological difficulties. Among these problematic aspects Schaar mentions that Fromm did not find these five needs by scientific investigation, rather "he found them in the pages of a number of philosophers and moralists and in his own brief philosophical analysis of the human condition. They are philosophical postulates not empirical findings" (Schaar, 1961: 52).<sup>1</sup>

Another difficulty is that Fromm confuses his proposed existential dichotomies by introducing historical ones. Schaar holds that the relationship between both kinds of dichotomies is more intricate than Fromm would admit. He refutes Fromm's proposal that historical dichotomies are annulled if enough courage and wisdom is applied by man. In his opinion, man's "shortage of courage and wisdom is part of the very definition of the human condition" (Schaar, 1961: 55). The realization of this inevitable conclusion, Schaar argues, would cripple the utopian aspirations of Fromm's thought.

Another logical difficulty that Schaar discusses is Fromm's blindness to the dangers involved in jumping from "is" to "ought."



"Even if we assume that the needs he describes are genuine empirical findings, it is still logically impossible to leap from the discovery of such needs to the conclusion that they ought to be fulfilled in a certain way. We can at most conclude that they must be filled in some way if the organism is to survive" (Schaar, 1961: 56).

That is, the channels suggested by Fromm for the fulfillment of these needs are normative rather than empirical.

Embraced in Fromm's analysis of the human situation is a presumptuous assumption that permeates the structure of his writings: There is moral progress. History itself, Fromm seems to believe, is a progressive march toward freedom and productive fulfillment of the basic needs achieved by previous generations. In this manner, "Fromm seems to assume a perfect communication among all people during all of history - an assumption too wayward to discuss" (Schaar, 1961: 58). Strictly speaking, Fromm is advocating a moral-biological evolution that makes the belief in the moral powers in man rest on the "assumption that cultural achievements become incorporated into persons and function as psycho-biological forces." This assumption impels a constant unfolding of the potentialities of the "self."

#### B. Fromm's Conception of the "Self"

Fromm has an essentialist conception of the "self." As has been portrayed in Chapter III, the roots of this view can be traced back to pre-Platonic philosophy. It is a view that has been discredited by Hume and has never after that regained philosophical credibility. Fromm, in any case, still believes that each individual has a unique "self." Over and above this premise, he concludes that the good is



synonymous with the fulfillment of the "self's" or "soul's" needs and the actualization of its potentialities. His central theme is that civilization ruthlessly undermines the goodness of man and crushes the deepest and noblest powers in him. The task of the modern psycho-analyst, he thinks, is the purification of man's soul or self. The restoration of the individual's lost sense of identity, it is assumed, would set things "right" by terminating the oppression of civilization or automation. The cure is far from complete, however, nor is it as certain as Fromm would like the contemporary social scientist to believe.

"It is not enough to say, as Fromm in effect does, that modern man has lost his self somewhere in the smoke of his own civilization, and that we need only blow away the smoke to find again the true self, the self in its essence, the self intact and noble. There may be no self to find" (Schaar, 1961: 64).

As was shown in Chapter III, the notion of the "self" as a substance, entity, inner integrating agent, or "an internal autonomous man" has been the strongest offspring of metaphysical speculations. In Schaar's language, it is a "bastard of confused language and fevered imagination." Even James, as was previously seen, professed that a knowledge of the notion of "self" as an inner agent was impossible.

Notwithstanding the dubiousness of man's knowledge about the "self" as a substance that has been traced to the sophistry movement, Fromm and many other humanistic theorists still dogmatically establish their whole social, political, and philosophical theorizing on the premise that something called the "self" exists and can be ascertained.

"The self is a substance with its own qualities, its own essence. On the basis of this dubious pre-Humean



conception, he (Fromm) moves forward to build a theory of moral selfhood whose major article is that happiness means the realization of the inherent potentialities of the self. This whole Aristotelian notion of potentiality is as troublesome as the essentialist conception of the self. The notion of potentiality may be useful in some contexts, but it is very misleading in others. When it is used as a fundamental concept, as it is by Fromm, it leads to grievous confusion of thought" (Schaar, 1961: 67). (Rogers and Maslow will later be added.)

One underlying implication of the foregoing quotation is that the preoccupation of some social scientists with the problem of the "self" has transferred to the social sciences what once was a crisis in philosophy (Schaar, 1961).

In sum, it is Schaar's conclusion, with which the present author fully concurs, that Fromm has failed to find that indestructible core of human nature (the five basic needs) and that essence of the "self" for which he has diligently searched in all his books. Due to Fromm's claim that this search is based on scientific grounds, it is deemed necessary to illustrate his conception of the "science of man."

### C. Fromm's Science of Man

As an introductory remark to Fromm's conception of "the science of man" it is imperative to make clear from the beginning that in spite of his heavy appeal to science, the basic presuppositions have very little to do with science (Schaar, 1961). In other words, it will be demonstrated that his "appeal to science is a foreign element in his argument" (Schaar, 1961: 42). To begin with, even a Skinnerian would undoubtedly consent to Fromm's view of a scientific method:

"Its (the science of man) method is to observe the reactions of man to various individuals and social



conditions and from observation of these reactions to make inferences about man's nature... Human nature can never be observed as such but only in specific situations. It is the theoretical construction which can be inferred from empirical study of the behavior of man. In this respect, the science of man in constructing a 'model of human nature' is no different from other sciences which operate with concepts of entities based on, or controlled by, inferences from observed data and not directly observable themselves" (Fromm, 1967a: 33).

Paradoxically enough, rather than cohering with this sound empirical generalization he postulates, Fromm thinks that there are inherent traits of human nature that are universal and have been discovered by the past "spiritual teachers" or the "awakened ones." The scientific criterion of observation is rapidly replaced by the "rational insight" of some poets, philosophers, writers, men of wisdom, and prophets, such as Shylock, Ikhnaton, Moses, Kang Futse, Lao-tse, Buddha, Isaiah, Socrates, etc. (Fromm, 1955, 1967). In Fromm's judgment, these great "spiritual teachers" had, through their "rational insight" into the nature of man, discovered the same norms that have been governing man's behavior throughout history.

"Despite the wealth of data offered by anthropology and psychology, we have only a tentative picture of human nature. For an empirical and objective statement of what constitutes 'human nature' we can still learn from Shylock if we would understand his words about Jews and Christians in the wider sense as representative of all humanity" (Fromm, 1967a: 33).

In the final analysis, it should not be surprising to realize that Fromm's usages of certain terms such as "observation," "inference," and "data" are misleading. He shows a disregard for the canons of a scientific approach ignoring the technical usages of them and broadening them to be inclusively unrecognizable from the layman's



imprecise usage of them. His model of man, moreover, reveals a maximum rejection of the scientific model he himself pretends to expound. It (his model) views man with sacred admiration as an "unfathomable secret" about which psychology can only make negative statements. What Fromm terms "negative psychology" becomes a disguised version of traditional negative theology. The mysticism of "negative theology" is characterized as "love" in "negative psychology."

"Psychology can show us what man is not. It cannot tell us what man, each of us, is. The soul of the man, the unique core of each individual, can never be grasped adequately. It can be known only inasmuch as it is not misconceived. The legitimate aim of psychology, as far as ultimate knowledge is concerned is the negative, the removal of distortions and illusions, not the positive, full, and complete knowledge of a human being... We might speak of a 'negative psychology,' and furthermore say that full knowledge of man by thought is impossible, and that full knowledge can only occur in the act of love. Just as mysticism is a logical consequence of negative theology, love is the logical consequence of negative psychology" (Fromm, 1957: 10).

Fromm's poetic description of love, is in any event, incomprehensible and enigmatic. In appraisal of this method of "knowledge through love and care" nothing is more adequate than Schaar's comment: "That [it] is the language of mystical religion, not of empirical science."

If carefully scrutinized, "the method of love and care" for the study of man is nothing but the contemporary label of "humanistic methodology." Both of them are anchored in the premise that to reduce man into an object is "to rob him of his humanity and to close the door between you and him" (Schaar, 1961). This premise is couched in the classics of philosophy, literature, religion, and mythology. The



knowledge attainable from these domains is cited by Fromm as the "deepest truth" arrived at by the "awakened ones." Thence, it is a justifiable conclusion to say that despite Fromm's, and many other humanistic theorists', claim to conform to the desirata of an empirical science, they actually employ the methods of the poet, lover, artist, and mystic. The employment of these methods is built on an all-enveloping model of man that Hamlet expressed beautifully: How like an angel is man.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion of this analysis of Fromm, it would be maintained that he is "something of a juggler of incompatibles" (Schaar, 1961) whose system embodies a great number of irreconcilable principles and concepts and who is, in the first place "a moralist, a mystic and a utopian" (Schaar, 1961). This appears understandable if one remembers Fromm's elitist role of spreading Freud's uncompleted mission of founding "a new secular and scientific religion." Suffice it to remark that he is not the only one. There are other theorists who share the same aspiration.

## II. Carl Rogers

Although Rogers has been mostly known as a practicing non-directive psychotherapist, this aspect of his work will not be highlighted except inasmuch as it has bearing on his conception of the "self" and his humanistic orientation. Therefore, this discussion will be confined to three parts only.

1. Rogers' reaction to Skinnerianism or his posture concerning the conflict of "beyond freedom and dignity" versus "back to freedom



and dignity."

2. Rogers' conceptualization of the "self" and the "self-actualization" tendency.

3. Rogers' viewpoints regarding the current status of the philosophy of the social sciences.

A. Rogers versus Skinner

In Rogers' opinion, "over and above the circumstances which control all of us, there exists an inner experience of choice which is very important. This kind of thing Skinner has never been willing to recognize" (Time, September 1971). Despite the sharp divergence between the Rogerian and Skinnerian theoretical frameworks, they both show agreement on a broad conclusion: That the behavioral sciences are making a remarkable progress in understanding, controlling and predicting behavior. Their conceptions of a scientific process are, nevertheless, derived from two contrasting assumptions about man's nature. While Skinner is propagating a model of man that gives all responsibility to external environmental controls, Rogers nurtures the premise that the "self," or inner experience, is the only thing that counts. The social sciences, he asserts, should be instituted on the recognition that man is a self-determining, self-actualizing agent. The set of values alternative to behaviorism that he espouses depicts man "as a process of becoming, as a process of achieving worth and dignity through the development of his potentialities..." (Rogers, 1971: 321). He, furthermore, believes that the great paradox of the behavioral sciences is encompassed in two prominent "facts."



1. A scientific "fact" that examines behavior as determined by prior causation.

2. A "fact" that stresses "a responsible personal choice" which precedes and is superior to any scientific endeavour.

In contrast to the above aspect of Rogers' theorizing, Skinner raises the following criticism:

"Man as a process of becoming what? Self-actualization - for what? Inner control is no more a goal than external. What evidence is there that the client ever becomes truly self-directing? What evidence is there that he ever makes a truly inner choice of ideal or goal? Even though the therapist does not do the choosing, even though he encourages self-actualization, he is not out of control as long as he holds himself ready to step in when the occasion demands - when, for example, the client chooses the goal of becoming a more accomplished liar or murdering his boss" (Skinner, 1971: 325).

In summary, Rogers perceives man with the rosy glasses of an optimistic "scientist" who gives evidence of desiring to have his cake and to eat it too. Nothing is more illustrative of this point than Rogers' article "Persons or Science? A Philosophical Question" (1961) in which he expresses an increasing discomfort at the distance between the rigorous objectivity in himself as a scientist brought up in the tradition of logical positivism and the "almost mystical subjectivity" due to his therapeutic experiences. As a result of these therapeutic experiences, Rogers exalts the individual's affirmation to become himself, an expression that is ambiguously described by him.

#### B. Rogers Self-Theory

The "Self" is the major explanatory construct in Rogers'



personality theory. Three basic assumptions are made regarding human nature (Rotter, 1967).

1. The fundamental datum of Rogers' personality theory is the individual's subjective experience, which is "reality" for the individual.

2. Every individual has an inborn tendency towards "self-actualization," that is defined as the inherent tendency of the organism to cultivate all its capacities in ways which seem to maintain or enhance the organism. The self-actualization tendency is Rogers' motivational concept that treats the behavior of the organism as goal-directed.

3. The third assumption is that each person engages in "an organismic valuing process" by classifying certain experiences as positive and others as negative. Rogers asserts that "reality" exists only in the person's own experiences or subjective environment. His emphasis on empathy or inter-subjective validation is very explicitly set forth. He claims that predictions about the individual's behavior cannot be derived from objective description of events or stimulus conditions, but rather from understanding the person's internal frame of reference.

To the antecedent three primary assumptions regarding human nature, Rogers adds four higher level constructs.

1. The first construct is the concept of the "self." This concept is viewed as part of a process of differentiation of the individual's experiences. It is linked or symbolized in "an awareness of being." In brief, it is conceptualized as an object in the



experiential field of the organism abstracted from experience.

Although Rogers admits that he started his work with the settled notion that the "self" was a vague, ambiguous, scientifically meaningless term that has gone out of the psychologist's vocabulary with the departure of the introspectionists, he now believes that his clinical experience has given him fruitful clues or insights to its nature. If scrutinized carefully, the value of these "insights" is debatable. Rogers, like Fromm, is a juggler attempting to compromise an "operational definition" of the "self" (Rogers, 1959) and a phenomenological description of it. He certainly confounds the two general meanings of "self" that prevail in the literature (Wylie, 1961). On the one hand, he basically speaks of the "self" as an agent or a gestalt and on the other hand he principally describes it as an object due to his conflict of aspiring to be a rigorous scientist and a humanistic theorist simultaneously. The confusion is distinct in Rogers' characterization of the "self-concept" as a gestalt or configuration.

"Hence, we believe that it is more fruitful to define the self-concept as a gestalt which is available to awareness" (Rogers, 1959: 201).

2. The need for positive regard. This is considered to be a universal need. It is defined as the need for significant others to regard the individual positively in terms of certain attitudes such as warmth, respect, liking, acceptance, etc.

3. The need for positive self-regard. This need follows developmentally from the need for positive regard. It denotes a positive regard satisfaction that has become associated with a particular self-experience or a group of self-experiences undergone



through by the individual independently of direct dependence on the attitudes of others. That is, "the individual becomes his own significant other" (Rogers, 1959: 209).

4. The acquisition of conditions of worth. When some self-experiences are avoided or sought as being more or less worthy of positive regard or self-regard, the individual is said to have acquired a condition of worth. The conditions of worth are taken over from significant others and are used for the positive or negative evaluation of a set of self-experiences.

In sum, Rogers' self-theory assumes that the human infant is equipped with an inherent motivational system whose primary explanatory concept is the self-actualizing tendency, a part of which is differentiated or symbolized into "an awareness of being." This "awareness of being" is thereafter elaborated into a concept of "self" as an outcome of transactional processes with the environment. The internal or subjective environment exists only for the individual and constitutes the only "reality" for him irrespective of the external stimulus conditions. Eventually, Rogers' theory does not look any different from Thomas's symbolic interactionist theory of "the definition of the situation."

"He (the human infant) lives in an environment which for theoretical purposes may be said to exist only in him, or to be of his own creation... It is the perception of the environment which constitutes the environment regardless as to how this relates to some 'real' reality which we may philosophically postulate" (Rogers, 1959: 222).

Entangled in this process of "becoming one's self" is one's choice or freedom to construct his own "social reality." Accordingly, Rogers



thinks that man "is a free agent who has within him the power to destroy another or himself, and also the power to enhance himself and others. Faced with this naked reality of decision, he chooses to move in the direction of being himself" (Rogers, 1961: 204).

Coupled with the Rogerian emphasis on "man's freedom" is his adoration of man's "exquisite rationality."

"I have little sympathy with the rather prevalent concept that man is basically irrational and that his impulses if not controlled will lead him to the destruction of self and others. Man's behavior is exquisitely rational, moving with subtle and ordered complexity toward the goals his organism is endeavoring to achieve. The tragedy for most of us is that our defenses keep us unaware of this rationality, so that consciously we are moving in one direction while organismically we are moving in another" (Rogers, 1957: 229).

While in the foregoing quotation Rogers explicitly rejects the traditional psychoanalytic model of man, he also denounces the behavioristic model that, in his judgment, transforms people into objects and "weakens," "devalues," or "destroys" "the subjective individual, the inner self, the person in the process of becoming, the unreflective consciousness of being" (Rogers, 1961: 213-214).

The Rogerian rejection of both models, the psychoanalytic and the behavioristic, is mingled with his viewpoint regarding the status of the current philosophy of the social sciences.

C. Rogers' Viewpoint Regarding the Current Philosophy of the Social Sciences

This section will examine two aspects of Rogers' thoughts:

1. His thoughts regarding the current philosophy of the behavioral sciences.



2. His thoughts concerning the challenges and prospects of humanistic psychology.

It is noteworthy to say that the two aspects are interrelated. Their separation is merely meant to supply a more refined classification.

To begin with, Rogers seems to suffer from a deep conflict of standing in two camps, "the world of the precise, hard scientist, and the world of the sensitive subjective person" (Rogers, 1965: 185). As a scientist, he values precision, adequate testing, observable behavior, operational definitions, sophisticated experimental designs, elegance and the discovery of lawful relationships of enduring character.

"As a psychologist I am always looking for the invariant relationship, the statement that  $x$  always precedes  $y$ , or is related to it in some invariant manner" (Rogers, 1965a: 183).

On the other side, he, as a person, places "a primary value on the person of the human individual" and upon "the significance and worth of each individual" (Rogers, 1965a). Consequently, he deplores the existing trend in the behavioral sciences of "depersonalizing" and "dehumanizing" the individual.

Rogers cherishes the subjective, private world of the person for, in his understanding, "most of our significant hypotheses, even for our research grow out of our private and internal world, or out of the empathetic understanding of the private world of another" (Rogers, 1965a: 185). This assertion drags Rogers into making another assertion which is much more dangerously far-reaching in its implications: all knowledge including all scientific knowledge rests on the subjective.



In Rogers' opinion, science or the pursuit of "truth" is contingent on the intuitive, subjective, sensing of an underlying "pattern" or "gestalt" or "a hidden reality" that "may shine through!" The perception of this pattern, whose characteristics he elucidates, constitutes, in Rogers' thinking, "the heart of all true science." Paradoxically enough, operationism is claimed to be the "most satisfactory mode of putting the pattern to test."

Two immediate criticisms come to mind in reaction to Rogers' allegation of the sponsorship of operationism.

1. The first criticism is derived from another article by Rogers himself (Rogers, 1961). Its phrasing will be kept in its original question form.

"How could it be that (Freud) and I, working with such a similar purpose in such intimate relationships with individuals in distress experience people so differently?" (Rogers, 1961: 81)?

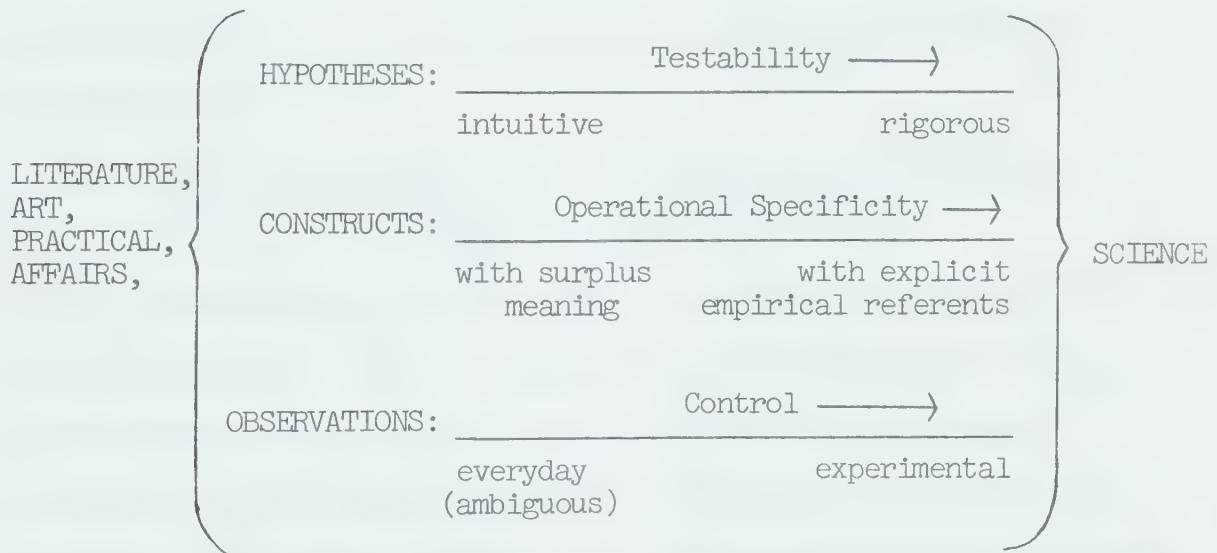
An appropriate answer to Rogers' question is found in Nettler's Explanations (1970: 14-24) where the alleged costs of operational definitions are exposed in seven intertwined drawbacks. Of special significance is the conclusion that different predictions could be variously derived from the same operational measures. To borrow Nettler's terms, "the same operation may mean different things" (Nettler, 1970: 14). The implication here is that Rogers' emphasis on operationism, along with his emphasis on subjective validity, is not warranted. This in itself leads to the discussion of the three basic elements in the construction of a scientific theory (see Figure 1). This discussion will establish the second criticism that will be



stated in advance: Although the social sciences seek to establish a system of knowledge based upon standard scientific methods of verification, "insight," "intuition," "hunch," "common sense," do initially enter the scientific endeavour in suggesting possible relationships among data. To make these subjective variables, as Rogers does, the ultimate criteria of validation is, to the present researcher, an erroneous approach. In order to avoid a long embarkment on this point, the following figure shows the three basic elements in the construction of a scientific theory.

Figure 1

The Three Basic Elements of Scientific Theory Construction



(From: Marx Theories in Contemporary Psychology, 1963, p. 11.)



In discussing Figure 1, Marx (1963) emphasizes the distinction between "discovery" and "confirmation." The latter is conceptualized as the hallmark of science for "we have confidence in scientific propositions precisely because of their confirmation" (Marx, 1963: 13). Problems of the significance of propositions belong to the context of discovery, where science in its rudimentary stage is perceived as a creative endeavour (left side of the figure). Rogers gives prominence primarily to the discovery part which is more intimately associated with literature, art, philosophy, practical affairs, etc.

The implicit contradiction in Rogers' thoughtway seems to be this: Because subjective elements enter into the scientific enterprise, particularly at the stage of observation and hypothesis formulation, they are assumed to be the final criteria of substantiation or confirmation.

"Without the creative, inner subjective hypothesis, all the elaborate machinery of outward verification would, in my judgment, be sterile" (Rogers, 1963: 74).

The foregoing quotation brings to the forefront Rogers' unbalanced stress on what he terms as "subjective knowing." Contrary to what Rogers claims, this conception of the "creative inner hypothesis" has not been disregarded by the philosophy of the social sciences. Rogers himself admits that this inner hypothesis eventuates "as the formal hypothesis to be operationally tested," meaning that the ultimate criteria of verification should be public or concensual, rather than individualistic, idiosyncratic and personal. He explicitly contradicts himself by assuming superiority of the subjective way of knowing and at the same time pretending to adhere to



operational measures.

"This is still another point to be made about this objective way of knowing. Since it has had such vast importance, and since it has led to such incredible technological advances, it is often forgotten that it is not necessarily superior to the first, subjective way of knowing, and that in crucial instances, it bows to it" (Rogers, 1963: 76).

In brief, Rogers is obviously suffering from a confusion between the realization that subjective elements do enter the initial stages of the observation of certain phenomena and the formulation of inner hypotheses, and the recognition that there are standard scientific methods or procedures that confirm or disconfirm these personal conjectures. The confusion is one between what was elaborated before as discovery versus confirmation. All in all, Rogers is trying hard to reconcile incompatible principles and concepts; an objective he shares with Fromm.<sup>3</sup>

#### D. Rogers' Views Concerning Humanistic Psychology

Rogers shares with Maslow the observation that there are three major trends in North American psychology: the behavioristic, psychoanalytic and self-theory. The self-theory trend, as was mentioned in the first chapter, came as a protest against the shortcomings of the other two trends. It is still an emerging trend whose boundaries are too diversified and vaguely defined. Its exponents' enunciation stresses "the primacy of the subjective" in scientific analyses. Their dilemma, however, is the erroneous undertaking of a daring leap from the assertion that subjective elements penetrate the scientific method at the formative stage of



observation and hypothesis formulation to the conclusion that these subjective experiences are the supreme criteria of verification. The present researcher's viewpoint is that humanistic researchers and other investigators do use "intuition," "conjectures," "personal experiences" in their explanatory search. Although these subjective indicators might be conspicuous or weighty factors in hypothesis explication or derivation, they, by no means, should be taken as the conclusive desirata for the attainability of valid and reliable conclusions that are subject to public or objective validation. To characterize the humanistic theorists as individuals who are not "afraid of using their subjectivity, their 'indwelling' in their professional experiences, as explicit basis for their hypotheses" (Rogers, 1963: 79) and, one must add, for their conclusions too, is to propagate a philosophical posture under the aegis of science. To reiterate, one can say that while the humanistic theorists are clinging to "science" to describe the self-theory trend as a new mode in social-psychological theorizing, they are essentially giving rebirth to old philosophical controversies. For instance, despite Rogers' claim that scientific analysis is characteristic of the self-theory trend, he declares that the most crucial consequences of this trend is the "philosophical view of man" "as subjectively free, choosing, responsible, architect of the self" (Rogers, 1963: 90). He distinctively defines this "new" model contrasting it at the same time with the behavioristic and psychoanalytic models. His definition is typical of all other definitions of man in the self-theory trend.



"Each current in psychology has its own implicit philosophy of man. Though not often stated explicitly, these philosophies exert their influence in many significant and subtle ways. For the behaviorist, man is a machine, a complicated but none the less understandable machine, which we can learn to manipulate with greater and greater skill, until he thinks the thoughts, moves in the direction, and behaves in the ways which are selected for him. For the Freudian man is an irrational being, irrevocably in the grip of his past and the product of his past... From the existentialist perspective, from within the phenomenological internal frame of reference, man does not simply have the characteristic of a machine, he is not simply a being in the grip of unconscious motives, he is a person in the process of creating himself, a person who creates meaning in life, a person who embodies a dimension of subjective freedom... He has been enslaved by persons, by institutions, by the theories of psychological science. But he is firmly setting forth for a new declaration of independence. He is discarding the abilis of unfreedom. He is choosing himself, endeavouring in a most difficult and often tragic world to become himself - not a puppet, not a slave, not a machine, but his own unique individual self" (Rogers, 1963: 89).

The emergence of the self-theory trend with its exorbitant model of man results in the intriguing query of checking the validity of Rogers' assertion that any changes in the basic philosophy or methodology of the social sciences of man would inevitably lead to great changes in the sciences themselves (Rogers and Coulson, 1968). Thence, the question raised is: What changes, if any, would the self-theory orientation exert on the existing social-psychological theories? An adequate answer to this question will be delayed until the last chapter on the implications of the present research. It is commendable, however, to make an instantaneous reference to Rogers' article, "Some Questions and Challenges Facing a Humanistic Psychologist" (Rogers, 1965b). In this article, Rogers, surprisingly, puts humanistic psychology on trial. He reveals some skepticism and discouragement surrounding the viability of the third trend, which



has to grapple with the grand challenge of whether it can positively contribute to "an adequate philosophy of science and an adequate methodology of science which will truly add to verified knowledge and at the same time truly recognize the place of the subjective human being" (Rogers, 1965b: 2)? Rogers, in response to this challenge, shows certain worries about the possibility that the humanistic theorists might eventually become "only a temporary protestant group soon to be superseded" (Rogers, 1965b).

#### E. Evaluative Remarks

Rogers' self-theory has explicitly postulated certain assumptions about the nature of man that have simply to be accepted not tested (Rotter, 1967). Most of the key terms are ambiguously defined and are not anchored in observables. The outcome is that "while Rogers completely defines his major constructs, he tends to do so by using other abstractions which are either undefined or not clearly related to some kind of observables. The result is what Wendell Johnson has sometimes referred to as "semantic blockage" or "short-circuited abstracting" (Rotter, 1967).

Some of Rogers' concepts are gratuitous. The self-actualizing tendency is very broadly defined and is made to include a great variety of referents. It is assumed to be universal, an assumption that could not be guaranteed. Perhaps the best case that refutes the universality of the self-actualizing tendency is the lack of self-assertion among the Arapesh of New Guinea. Though it is posited as the major motivational variable, it is the need for positive regard



that is used to explain specific behavioral contingencies.

Rogers commits the same error of the symbolic interactionists of making the declaration that "the perception of the environment is what constitutes the environment." It is true that internal factors do enter into the perceptual process; but it is entirely incorrect or nonsensical to pronounce that "the world is what we make out of it" or "we see what we want to see." Studies in perception (Sherif, 1969; Dember, 1965) show that external stimulus situations have structure which, when clear and compelling, leaves little leeway for internal factors in psychological selectivity. In other terms, organizational relationships in perception are well established among the degree of structuredness of a stimulus situation, contribution of external-<sup>4</sup> internal factors, and alternatives in psychological patterning.

### III. Abraham Maslow

It was elaborated in Chapter II that Maslow cherishes a humanistic philosophy whose propelling incentive is "a discovery of man and his capacities, needs, and aspirations." Allied with this "revolutionizing" discovery is the acceleration of "higher intrinsic values" that are the subject of what Maslow calls "humanistic science." This science, it is contended, is more powerful with the "psyche" left in than "mechanistic science" that excludes experiential data.

Maslow's views regarding the nature, functions, and description of "humanistic science" are also discussed in the first three chapters of his Motivation and Personality (1970) as well as in several articles (Maslow, 1963b, 1965, 1967, 1968a, 1968b, 1969). Therefore,



the current presentation will focus on the "new conceptual language" he gave to psychology. Its key terms are "self-actualization," "peak-experiences," and "the hierarchy of needs" (Geiger, 1971).

A. "Self-Actualization"

Maslow (1971) describes eight ways in which one "self-actualizes." These are:

1. "Self-actualization" means experiencing fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption (Maslow, 1971: 45). It is maintained that at the moment of experiencing the person becomes "wholly and fully human" for "this is the moment when the self is actualizing itself" (Maslow, 1971: 45).

2. "Self-actualization" is an ongoing progression toward "growth choices" (choices that are connected with ultimate values of honesty, truth, beauty, justice, etc.).

3. "To talk of self-actualization implies that there is a self to be actualized" (Maslow, 1971: 45). Maslow opposes the "tabula rasa" conception of human nature postulating "something which is already there." This something is nothing but the "self."

"There is a self and what I have sometimes referred to as listening to the impulse voices means letting the self emerge" (Maslow, 1971: 46).

Nothing specific of the nature of this "self" as proposed by Maslow is elucidated. It is just some kind of a "supreme court" inside the person (Maslow, 1971: 46). This is not unlike the homunculus or inner gatekeeper conception (see Chapters I and II).

4. "Self-actualization" means being honest when in doubt; plus



taking responsibility. It is said that "each time one takes responsibility, this is an actualizing of the self" (Maslow, 1971: 47).

5. The previously listed four principles add up until the person acquiring them finds himself making "better choices about what is constitutionally right for him" (Maslow, 1971: 47). This step is not clearly delineated by Maslow whose ambiguous stress on the "self" is repeatedly brought up.

"One cannot choose wisely for a life unless he dares to listen to himself, his own self, at each moment in life, and to say calmly, 'No, I don't like such and such...'" (Maslow, 1971: 47).

6. "Self-actualization," Maslow admonishes, is not an end state but also a process of actualizing one's potentialities at any rate.

7. "Self-actualization" means experiencing transient moments called "peak experiences."

"They are moments of ecstasy which cannot be bought, cannot be guaranteed, cannot even be sought" (Maslow, 1971: 48).

They are depicted as "mystical experiences."

8. "Self-actualization" means the avoidance of repression in the sense of finding out "who one is," "what he is," "what he likes," "what he does not like," "what is good for him," "what his mission is," etc.

In this connection, Maslow speaks of two concepts: "desacralizing" and "resacralizing." The first is a defense mechanism meaning mistrust in the possibility of ultimate values and virtues. The latter concept commemorates "the medieval Christian unitive perception" of seeing the



sacred, the eternal and the symbolic (Maslow, 1966, 1971).

What Maslow is trying hard to say in all the eight ways of "self-actualization" is that the only valid indicator of psychological health is the attainment of "self-actualization experiences by an "autonomous self or pure psyche" (Maslow, 1961: 6). The nature of this "self" is mystified in certain poetic images or metaphors that have no bearing whatsoever on concensual validation or objective confirmation.

A dangerous implication of Maslow's emphasis on experiential knowledge, rather than public, is entailed in his thesis that abstract, verbal, unambiguous communication maybe less effective for some purposes than metaphorical, poetic, esthetic, primary-process techniques (Maslow, 1966). This thesis is basically the "new conceptual language" of "humanistic science" that Maslow and almost all the humanistic theorists are propounding. To state the same theme differently, scientific enterprises as depicted by Maslow and other humanistic theorists are not fundamentally distinct from poetic experiences with their openness to a multitude of subjectivistic interpretations. To reduce the meaning of the scientific process into this level leaves no apparent necessity or justification for the application of the term unless the term *per se* has procured some prestigious connotations that it has become extremely embarrassing to give them up; a point that was elaborated in Chapter II.

The upshot of the present discussion is that the call for the reformation or rehumanization of the social sciences by Fromm, Rogers, and Maslow carries with it the roots of the eighteenth-century



romantic movement with its enchanting glorification of the notion of the "noble savage" (Berkowicz, 1964, 1969).

B. Peak-Experiences

These are the second key concept in Maslow's "new conceptual language." They, as stated earlier, are the transient moments of ecstasy in "self-actualization." Maslow reports certain lessons learned from "peakers" who are believed to be the "finest," "healthiest," and "best specimen of mankind" (Maslow, 1962a). Some of these lessons are:

1. There is an experiencing of "something like mystic experiences, moments of great awe, moments of most intense happiness or even rapture or ecstasy or bliss" (Maslow, 1962a: 9). Most important, in Maslow's opinion, is the "peakers'" report that they had really seen "the ultimate truth," "the essence of things," "the secret of life." Maslow's language does not seem to lose its ancestry with the Platonic language.

2. Peak-experiences are natural phenomena. They are not associated with religion in a supernaturalistic sense. Some similarity, in any case, is not denied.

"The history of the sciences has been of one science after another carving a chunk for itself out of the jurisdiction of religion. It seems to be happening again. Or to put this all another way, peak-experiences can be considered to be truly religious experiences in the best and most profound, most universal, and most humanistic sense of that word. It may turn out that pulling religion into the realm of science will have been the most important consequence of this line of work" (Maslow, 1962a: 10).



This quotation is cardinally related to a subsequent chapter on "the self as a therapeutic response to the crisis of values in western society" in which the point will be made that modern man is engaged in a haunting search for a new religion.

3. The third lesson is that peak-experiences are more common than originally anticipated. They practically occur in everybody.

4. Peak-experiences come from many sources. They are not confined to far-out people such as monks, priests, yogis, Zen Buddhists, Orientalists, etc.

5. Regardless of their source, peak-experiences overlap; tend to be alike. Maslow generalizes that while the stimuli might be very different, the subjective experiences tend to be very similar. It is at this juncture that Maslow starts to juggle the irreconcilable, just like Fromm and Rogers. He again reminds one of the significance of metaphoric language as a vehicle to communicate these completely private experiences.

"I'm very sure now that the ineffability of such experiences has been overstated. It is possible to talk about them, to describe them, and communicate them. I do it all the time now that I have learned how. 'Ineffable' really means 'not communicable by rational, logical, abstract, verbal, analytical, sensible language'" (Maslow, 1962a: 13).

Two conditions are outlined for the communication of peak-experiences.

1. If both persons involved, the one relaying the experience and the one receiving it, are "peakers."

2. If the description is in poetic, rhapsodic or metaphoric language.



If these two conditions are met, then "miracles" can happen in the "humanistic science" proposed by Maslow and other humanistic theorists and refuted centuries ago by Protagorus and the sophistry movement (see Chapter III).

"It's true the psyche is alone, encapsulated - cut off from all else - and for two such psyches to communicate across the great chasm between them seems like a miracle. Well, the miracle happens" (Maslow, 1962: 13).

A further-reaching implication for a scientific model of man is Maslow's amalgamation of the descriptive-empirical function of scientific analysis with the prescriptive-normative "wisdom" of the utopian social reformer. The confusion of the "is" with the "ought" is explicitly acknowledged by Maslow - a characteristic he shares with Fromm and Rogers.

"In peak-experiences, the 'is' and the 'ought' merge with each other instead of being different or contradictory. The perception is that what is ought to be just that way..." (Maslow, 1962: 14).<sup>5</sup>

Maslow confesses that this is "the age-old problem of the relationship between 'facts' and 'values,' between is and ought, between the descriptive and the normative" (Maslow, 1962a, 1971). Notwithstanding his admission that philosophers, old and modern, have not reached anywhere with this problem, Maslow still thinks that he is helpfully adding "a third horn to the dilemma" in suggesting what he terms "fusion words," i.e. words that are normative and descriptive simultaneously.<sup>6</sup> Stated in an alternative way, he regresses to the ancient Socratic solution where the "is" dictates the "ought" or "factiness generates oughtness" or "full knowledge leads to right action" (Maslow, 1971: 120-122). Maslow unquestionably accepts the



Socratic belief that no man will willingly select falsehood over truth, or evil over good (Maslow, 1962a). In this respect, Schaar's conclusion about Fromm is also applicable to Maslow: he is a moralist, a mystic, and a utopian who believes that everything will come out right in the end if man only has faith in man. The difficulties inherent in his system flow from the attempt to translate empirical observations into moral imperatives (Schaar, 1961). Over and above Schaar's conclusion, this confusion of "fact" with "value" and vice versa places Maslow, and other humanistic theorists, in the category of ideologists. Their ideological explanations "become operative as they are believed, rather than as they are verified" (Nettler, 1970: 179).

#### C. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow claims to have formulated a positive theory of motivation whose chief consideration is the arrangement of "basic needs" in a hierarchy of less or greater priority or potency. He speaks of basic needs as incorporating the physiological needs upon whose gratification the emergence of "higher needs" occurs.

"At once other (and higher) needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new (and still higher) needs emerge and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative potency" (Maslow, 1970: 39).

The other "higher needs" that follow physiological needs are enumerated:

1. Safety needs: These include security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom, order, need for structure, etc.



2. Belonging and love needs: The craving for affectionate relationships with people in general. Maslow confesses that he has very little information about the belongingness need. He, furthermore, shares with Fromm and Rogers a pronounced impression on the importance of "love" in the social milieu. Like the other two theorists, he indicates that the absence of "love" means the prevalence of hostility, suspicion, and psychopathology (Goble, 1971).

3. Esteem needs: These needs are classified into two subsidiary sets.

- a. A desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery, competence, confidence, independence, freedom, etc.
- b. A desire for reputation or prestige, status, fame, glory, dignity, etc.

Maslow's agreement with and admiration of Fromm's and Rogers' emphasis on being loyal to "oneself," without elucidating what this really means, is diligently shown in the following quotation:

"From the theologians' discussion of pride, and hubris, from the Frommian theories about self-perception of untruth to one's own nature, from the Rogerian work with self, from essayists like Ayn Rand and from other sources as well, we have been learning more and more of the dangers of basing self-esteem on the opinions of others rather than on real capacity, competence, and the adequacy of the task" (Maslow, 1970: 45-46).

4. The need for self-actualization: This need was discussed previously in this chapter. In summary, it refers to man's desire for self-fulfillment. Its emergence takes place upon some prior satisfaction of the physiological, safety, love, and self-esteem needs.

Maslow's postulation of the "basic needs" raises, in his opinion,



a call for a re-evaluation and a possible resurrection of the instinct theory. He rejects the dominant stress in current sociopsychological theories on the plasticity, flexibility, and adaptability of the human organism. His main hypothesis is that "human urges or basic needs alone may be innately given to at least some appreciable degree..." (Maslow, 1970). In another source, Maslow vigorously attempts to make a case for the instinctoid character of spiritual and philosophical life (Maslow, 1971: 33). He daringly suggests the fusion of instinctiveness and rationality.

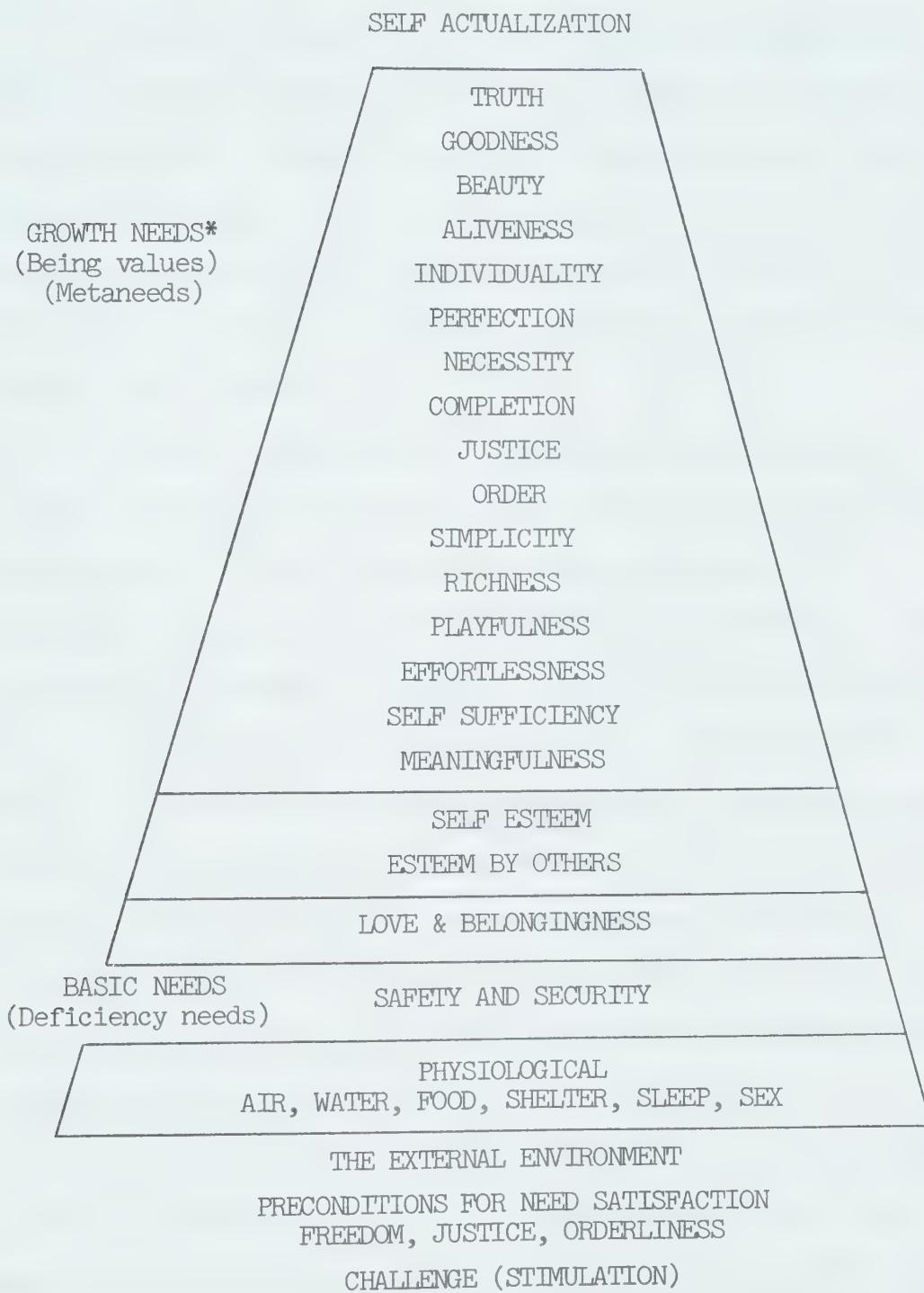
"... Because of this, the vital and even tragic mistake (in view of the historical consequences) has been made from time immemorial, of dichotomizing instinctive impulse and rationality in the human being. It has rarely occurred to anyone that they might both be instinctual in the human being, and more important, that their results or implied goals might be identical and synergic rather than antagonistic" (Maslow, 1971: 84).

Maslow's "basic-need" theory is stretched further in his Toward a Psychology of Being (1968c) and in several articles (Maslow, 1962a, 1963a, 1964b). He speaks in terms of "growth needs" (being values or B-cognition) as contrasted with "deficiency needs" (D-values, D-cognitions). The following is a schematic representation.



Figure 2

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



\*Growth needs are all of equal importance (not hierarchical)

(From: Goble, The Third Force, 1971, p. 52.)



Two immediate criticisms can be directed against Maslow's theory of "basic needs":

1. Maslow, just like Fromm and Rogers, has undertaken the search for the indestructible human core. To each one of them, this core is wrapped in a number of psychic needs that are, in a final sense, merely cultural variables or derivatives of a set of specific cultural norms. Pertinent to Maslow's "basic need" theory is Schaar's conclusion in connection with Fromm's proposition of five basic needs that was stated earlier.

2. Young's (1936) survey of the experimental literature on the strength of various biogenetic motives established the conclusion that the dominance of behavior patterns is largely dependent upon situational variables. This conclusion does not support the hypothesis of an immutable hierarchy of drives. The same conclusion is generalized to the dominance of sociogenic motives. Sherif and Sherif (1956) say that in regard to the relative weight of various sociogenic motives, a fixed hierarchy of importance under all conditions is not validated. They add that the relative importance of sociogenic motives varies from one culture to another. Hence, the positing of a categorical number of social needs accounts for only a limited number of individuals in a particular place at a particular time.

It is said that the older Maslow got, the more "philosophical" he became; in the sense of not being capable of separating "the pursuit of psychological truth from philosophical questions" (Geiger, 1971). This observation is highly revealing regarding Maslow's unsatiated search for the introduction of "contradictions," "illogi-



calities," and "mysteries" into science (Geiger, 1971; Buhler, 1965). His stress is on the "reintegration of our instinctoid" need for spiritual values in science (Buhler, 1965: 108). As a consequence, Maslow's call for the resurrection of the instinct theory is an easy way of avoiding the confrontations concomitant with the engagement in scientific pursuits. The inclusion of every item under the rubric of science leaves the term utterly indistinguishable from art, philosophy, poetry, etc. This in itself confirms the foregoing Passmore's and Oakeshott's (see Chapter III) contention that the more general the explanatory concept, the more ambiguities it can assimilate or tolerate. Maslow's venture to combine "intuitive verification" or "emotional validation" (Warmoth, 1965: 19) with public substantiation projects an underlying theme in the contemporary status of the social sciences: That the recurrent questions with which modern scientists have been quarreling are philosophical in nature. This point is intelligently illustrated in Wertheimer's recent book, Fundamental Issues in Psychology (1972). In short, the contention is hereby made that the powerful resurgence of the "self" as an explanatory concept in sociopsychological theories is indicative of a period of mistrust of the existing philosophy of the social sciences on the behalf of some disenchanted social reformers. Psychology, it is historically settled, was divorced from philosophy and initiated as a science only when it lost its mind and soul. The trend nowadays is to give these same attributes back to psychology. This observation, plus the semantic confusion encompassing the derivative meanings of the "self" is a prime example of the proposition that will be discussed in a



succeeding chapter attributing the restoration of the "self" to the present crisis of values in western society. This proposition seems to be supported by the self-actualization theorists, especially Maslow's Religion, Values, and Peak-Experiences (1964a). In this book, "Maslow's extensive researches pick up the religious thread where William James dropped it..." (Mumford, 1965: 230).

Further evaluative notations on Maslow will be consolidated in the concluding remarks of this chapter.

#### IV. Humanistic Psychology: Old wine in new wineskins

The humanistic ideal, it is ascertained, is more concerned with changing the world than describing it (Eysenck, 1968). In anticipation of this desired change, the humanists commit the frequent mistake of assuming that other people are like themselves, which is, according to Eysenck (1968) the purest form of anthropomorphism. Being vulnerable to this anthropomorphic fallacy, the humanists readily forget the law of individual differences which certifies the existence of diversity among individuals and proves that no general rule or law can cover all the different human needs, desires, and motivations. The implication of this law is that the humanistic theorists' mounting search for universal "basic needs" is more of wishful thinking than actuality. Their desire to change the world is mingled with their presupposed conceptions or conclusions about the way things ought to be and their alarming discomfort with the fact that "the only criterion for deciding what is natural to man is what man actually does" (Knight, 1968: 6).



In the history of social thought, Ibn Khaldun is credited (Barnes and Becker, 1951; Mahdi, 1964; Myers, 1964; Roscher, 1966; Rosenthal, 1958; Schmidt, 1967) as the first social thinker to transmigrate the human existential question from the realm of the prescriptive-normative to the realm of the descriptive-empirical. The question with which pre-Khaldunic social thought struggled was reformulated from "how man ought to live" into a factual description of "how man in reality lives." The supernatural premises were replaced by observable ones correlated with the social-psychological needs of man, social organization, social structure and moral order within society. Can one then accuse the contemporary humanistic social thinkers of regressing to the pre-Khaldunic social philosophy? If one contemplates the humanistic theorists' response to this accusation, one is bound to run into a set of justifications that are principally the same. All of them accentuate the focal point that they are not engaged in metaphysical speculations like the pre-Khaldunic social thinkers; that they are trying to scientifically study human values or needs; that the great "revolution" happening is the concentration on inner awareness or experiences (the inner world) rather than on transcendental absolutes (the outer world).

A major point that this chapter intended to pinpoint is that the inherent human needs proposed by the three theorists discussed are philosophical postulates rather than empirical findings or generalizations. They are grounded in the utopian aspiration of how man should ideally be rather than on a realistic analysis of how man actually is. The uncautious jumping from "is" to "ought" signifies



the dilemma with which the humanistic theorists are confronted: The acquisition of moral values versus the justification of them. Science can explain how moral principles or social norms are acquired, but it cannot justify the preference of one principle over another. The problem of acquisition is an empirical one while the issue of justification is an ethical one logically dissociated from statements about matters of fact (Ayer, 1968). To confound acquisition with justification is to become an ideologist, a moralist, a mystic and a utopian. This point is characteristic of the three theorists discussed. It also illustrates that the appeal to science by the humanistic theorists is an alien element in their disputes. The manner in which this term was stretched to make it extremely inclusive and consequently indistinguishable from other theological, prosaic, poetic, and philosophic enterprises was accentuated.

The humanistic theorists' scientific model of man is constructed on a philosophical view of the nature of man as an "unfathomable secret" transcending the captivity of any rigorous scientific analysis. This premise itself leaves the invocation of science unnecessarily called for. The dubiousness of the "primacy-of-the-subjective" or "humanistic methodology" or "love-and-care" approach was amplified by the present researcher as a propagation of a philosophical posture under the aegis of science. This thesis is corroborated by Wylie's dissension in her insightful analysis of "the present status of self theory" (Wylie, 1968). She makes reference to the nonscientific or personal considerations that have strongly influenced the self theorists.



"Thus, although these theorists sometimes laud science and claim that they themselves are working toward scientific theories, their feelings about the scientific method and its implications seem to be markedly ambivalent. Furthermore, their concepts are sometimes inconsistent with scientific assumptions. The assumption of determinism stressed by Freud and modern behaviorists is interpreted by self theorists as robbing man of dignity and creativity, and as inadequate to the understanding of man... However, no conclusive arguments rational or empirical against positivism and determinism are presented, nor can they be... It seems that these theorists want to have their cake and eat it too. They want to have the advantages of being scientific. At the same time, they want to reintroduce assumptions which are inappropriate to the scientific method, and to bring into psychology concepts that operate in a nondeterministic way and are indescribable by scientific operations" (Wylie, 1968: 733-734).

Three assumptions of the kind Wylie refers to are introduced by the humanistic theorists:

1. Man as essentially rational.
2. Man as a free agent or actor.
3. Man as basically good.

The first assumption is acknowledged by Fromm, particularly in his The Revolution of Hope (1968); by Rogers who describes man as "exquisitely rational"; and by Maslow who suggests the fusion of impulsiveness and rationality. The second and third assumptions are distinctly manifested in all the writings of the humanistic theorists. These three assumptions are philosophically controversial. They are refuted by Nawas (1969) as utopian aspirations. Wertheimer (1972) ties this category of assumptions to the exalted view of man that carries with it the conviction that man's nature can never be completely grasped by the scientific method. He raises the issue in



this fashion: "Man can't versus man can be studied scientifically" (Wertheimer, 1972: 65). He also sees the question of whether a science of human behavior is possible as closely linked to whether man is perceived as fundamentally good, evil, or neutral. The existing state of affairs surrounding this question is that optimism concerning the possibility of a science is usually associated with a pessimistic or at least neutral view of the nature of man, while the optimistic conception of the dignity of human nature generally denotes pessimism regarding the possibility of a science of man.

The author of the present research disagrees with Wertheimer's phrasing of the issue in its simplistic form (whether man can be studied scientifically or not). A major attempt of the present study has been focused on showing that the humanistic theorists, and the symbolic interactionists, are championing a challenge to the existing scientific model in social-psychological theories and the proposition of an alternative model that patronizes what is labelled as "humanistic methodology." Thus, to both prevalent outlooks stated above, man can and should be studied scientifically. However, there is a discordance with respect to the meaning or interpretation of a scientific study of man. As was stressed antecedently, a salient feature of this chapter was to demonstrate that the proposed "humanistic science" is an integral part of philosophical controversies disguised under the label of science. Therefore, while the present author wholeheartedly agrees with Wertheimer (1972) that among the most basic questions in the history of human thought is whether man's nature is fundamentally evil or fundamentally good, he, along with Wertheimer too, cautions



that this question should be left to "philosophy or religion for it is one that empirical science is not equipped to handle" (Wertheimer, 1972: 68). The same verdict is generalizable to other philosophical assumptions implicit or explicit in the humanistic theorists' recommended model of man. Contrary to Maslow's allegation quoted in Chapter I, the new image of man generated by the self theorists is not really new. It has been pervasive in the history of man's social thought. The only new ingredient is the bewitching attachment to the label of science in pursuits that are primarily philosophical in nature. Thence, it appears that the self theorists are advocating a resurrection of a dignified image of man historically entombed in the essentialist philosophical tradition that was documented in an antecedent chapter. It is worth repeating the Platonic and Aristotelian glorification that was quoted in that chapter. Man was romanticized as:

"the measure of all things, of all truth, in the sense that universal concepts, ideas, and principles lie embedded in his soul and form the starting point of all his knowledge" (Thilly, 1961: 77).

The content of this quotation is drastically similar to the humanistic theorists' allegedly "new" discovery that all knowledge is ultimately subjective. Suffice it to say that the exponents of the philosophical posture the quotation signifies were continually challenged until the challenge reached its climax in the Humean demolition of the credibility of the self (or the soul).

One can say that the humanistic theorists, and the symbolic interactionists, are not only reviving a chronically romanticized picture of man, but they are also bringing into the social sciences



the ancient crisis of philosophy, i.e. controversies regarding selfhood). The latter accusation takes one back to Buddha's credo of the "greed of views." It urges the formulation of two conclusions that were alluded to in Chapter III.

1. Social-psychological research based on the third-trend theorizing will lead "farther and farther into a maze of unanswerable questions."

2. Global hypotheses and explanations about the "self" as an inner activator will persist to be conjectural and lacking in verifiability.

Starting from the premise that an entity called the "self" exists, Fromm, Rogers and Maslow reach the conclusion that the good is synonymous with the self's needs and the fulfillment or actualization of its potentialities. As Schaar (1961) illustriously clarified the whole Aristotelian notion of potentiality is as troublesome as the essentialist conception of the "self." Its misleading usage as a fundamental, explanatory concept terminates in a "grievous confusion of thought" that typifies the humanistic theorists' writings. Empirical evidence (Berkowicz, 1964, 1969) cripples the humanist utopian quests with their overwhelming optimism. Berkowicz's critique of the self-actualization postulate is praiseworthy:

"This doctrine has been widely accepted in its various forms, but not necessarily because of any empirical substantiation... Basically, however, the self-actualization thesis is a romantic throwback to the eighteenth-century notion of the 'noble savage.' Based more on wishes of what man should be like than on actual hard fact - the advocates of this view generalize from a small sample of overinhibited people - this



growth-through-gratification doctrine has a dubious scientific and philosophic status, both as a motivational theory and as a formula for bringing up the youth" (Berkowicz, 1969: 87).

The inconsistency of the growth-through-gratification principle in the thoughtways of the humanistic theorists is also disclosed by Schaar (1961) who debates that if we take seriously the notion that existence is the same as unfolding one's powers, it follows that the person who does not unfold his powers is in effect already dead and suicide, to him, is merely a public announcement of an already accomplished fact. The humanists' argument tries hard to amalgamate "living" with "living well" or the "drive to live" with "a hierarchy of styles of life." Unfortunately, the amalgamation is not successful for "no amount of research or argument will alter the fact that the question of whether an organism is dead or alive is an empirical question, while the question of whether an organism is living well or poorly is an ethical one" (Schaar, 1961: 32).

Wylie's (1968) criticism of the hypothesized drive toward self-actualization concentrates on the following points.

1. The definitions of "self-actualization" are far from being operational for no alleged connections with observable antecedents or consequents are specified.

2. No evidence or relevant arguments are offered to support the assertion that a drive of the self-actualizing variety is an inborn biological "given."

3. Even if there is such a "given," merely to postulate it does not advance the explanation of motivated behavior, i.e. the



possible biological mechanism or characteristics of such a drive are left entirely obscure.

4. Postulating a single, all-inclusive, "master" motive is insufficient theoretically to account for all the complexities of direction and selectivity in behavior which it is supposed to explain.

5. The teleological qualities assigned to the inborn drive of self-actualization augment the ambiguity regarding the antecedents and consequents of motivated behavior. For instance, the self-actualization theorists do not give clear specifications or definitions of the "goal" nor do they offer any intelligible indicators as to how one can recognize the directionality and selectivity that defines the behavior which is supposedly motivated by self-actualization. Furthermore, no means are given for distinguishing the influence of self-actualizing drives from the influence of other habitual, cognitive, or situational determinants.

Zigler and Child (1969) point to an error in two implicit assumptions of the self-actualization theorists.

1. That the potential for growth, mastery, or effectiveness is unlimited in man.

2. That this potential is the same in every man.

They, in agreement with Eysenck (1968) and Berkowicz (1964, 1969), illustrate that these assumptions are incompatible with the law of individual differences that is essential for a proper understanding of socialization and that has been empirically substantiated. Their argument lends additional support for the attribution of the anthropomorphic fallacy to theorists of the humanistic persuasion.



To conclude this chapter, the present author's critical evaluation is that humanistic or self psychology shares with symbolic interactionism the same romantic glorification of the individual as well as the promises extrapolated in the previous chapter. Both outlooks are generously offering the same old wine that was discovered to be distasteful as early as the fourteenth century.



FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The regression to the pre-Khaldunic question of how man ought to live is explicitly stated in Fromm's writings. Fromm believes that the fundamental questions of human existence are: "What man is, how he ought to live, and how the tremendous energies within man can be released and used productively." Man For Himself (1967a: 14).

<sup>2</sup>For a contrasting viewpoint see Skinner's Beyond Freedom and Dignity (1971). It is needless to remind that the wrangle over man's basic nature continues with the perennially crucial question: Is man closer to a God or a dog?

<sup>3</sup>These irreconcilable categories are: subjective knowing versus objective knowing; operationism versus intuition; use of sophisticated experimental designs versus primacy of creative inner hypotheses; empathetic understanding versus scientific explanation; "hidden reality" or pattern versus public confirmation or validation; Rogers the person versus Rogers the scientist.

<sup>4</sup>The outcome of a perceptual experience is determined by the following factors:

1. The nature of the stimulus.
2. The position of the stimulus in relation to other stimuli.
3. The state of the organism.
4. Personality type, in case of human subjects.

<sup>5</sup>For a more extensive exposition see Maslow's articles, "Fusions of Facts and Values," American Journal of Psychoanalysis (1963: 23, 117-131); and "Neurosis as a Failure of Personal Growth," Humanitas (1967: 153-169). Both articles are reprinted in Maslow's The Farther Reaches of Human Nature (1971).

<sup>6</sup>It is appropriate in this connection to make reference to Maslow's former philosophy professor's scolding response to Maslow's treatment of this ancient problem. Maslow's phrasing of his professor's reaction is worth presenting.

"Don't you realize what you have done here? There are two thousand years of thought behind this problem and you just go skating over this thin ice so easily and casually" (Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, 1971: 27-28).



## CHAPTER VI

### DERIVATIVE MEANINGS OF THE "SELF" AS AGENT: DEFINITIONAL AND THEORETICAL PERPLEXITIES

#### I. Conflictive Conceptions of the "Self"

The abundant literature on the "self" testifies to the popularity of this concept in current socio-psychological theories and research. Notwithstanding its indubitable currency, the concept of "self" is clouded regarding its developmental nature, meanings, and functions. According to Harris (1971) "the most mysterious and obscure entity in the universe is that which is closest and most immediate to us; it is the self" (Harris, 1971: 39). He, like many others, unsuccessfully tries to remove the obscurity encompassing the "self" as a central internal agency. The concept continues to be mystified under a variety of labels. The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate some of the meanings that the "self" has acquired in order to raise some of the basic theoretical issues encountered in self-theory or self-psychology.

It should be indicated at the outset that no consensus about the definition of "self" exists and that in most cases its meaning is implied as given rather than explicitly stated. The best illustration of the conflictive conceptions of "self" is the critical issue of the postulate of many "selves" as opposed to a single "real self." The assumption of a "real self" is exemplified in Shakespeare's Hamlet



where Polonius's parting counsel to his son, Laertes, was:

This above all: to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
(Hamlet, Act I, Sc. 3.)

Cottrell (1969) tells us that the validity of this statement is unequivocally accepted. According to him, the obvious (everybody knows what his "own self" means) becomes problematic only when an attempt is made to spell out its precise meaning. Ignoring this precaution, Cottrell endeavours to clarify what is denoted by the term "self" from a symbolic interactionist perspective. That is, "self" is "a reflexive product of social interaction" (Cottrell, 1969: 548). The ambiguity inherent in this position was demonstrated in Chapter IV. It actually reminds one of the "Indian poker game." In this game, the players wear some kind of hats or similar objects on their heads and each player places his cards around the hat. The player, in this situation, is unable to see his own cards. Therefore, his betting is almost completely contingent on his perceptions of the cards of other players. In other terms, the empathetic task of "taking the role of the other" is not as simple as the symbolic interactionists want us to believe nor is its accuracy guaranteed; (of course, some of us are better poker players than others!).

Gergen's (1972) recent research, in contradistinction to the preceding interactionist position of what it means for one to be his "own self," shows that although Polonius's advice might have a ring of validity fitting our religious and moral values, it is still poor psychology because "we are not apt to find a single, basic self to



which we can be true" (Gergen, 1972: 31). His research confirms a proposition of William James, also shared by Cooley and Mead, about the multiplicity of social selves. Interestingly enough, the implication of this research gives evidentiary support to Hume's "bundle" theory of the "self" and constitutes a serious challenge regarding the viability of "self" as a generic integrative agency. It appears that grand theories or theoretical formulations about the "self" as an agent represent a collection of overgeneralized statements that embody a great variety of cognitive, motivational, philosophical, and poetic categories that are not amenable to empirical exploration. This suggestion conforms with Wylie's (1961) conclusion that only "self" referents having specified attributes could yield potentially fruitful research. That is to say, only low-level hypotheses or generalizations about the self-concept (second meaning of self) have a promising investigatory value. The significance of this conclusion is emphatically posed in view of the fact that the resurrection of the "self" in contemporary socio-psychological theories after the 1940's, particularly in the form of humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism, is heavily concentrated on an all-inclusive, global, or integrative meaning of the "self" rather than on a precise one. To phrase this issue differently, the symbolic interactionist and humanistic revolt witnessed in psychology and sociology nowadays is reflective of a deviation from the only promising, scientifically fruitful, and methodologically sound research procedures or strategies concerning the "self" whose metaphorical connotations remain susceptible to a myriad of alternative interpretations.<sup>1</sup> Such poetic or



metaphoric usage of the concept of "self" allows validation only by the "my-word-against-your-word" approach rather than through a scientific conceptualization or experimental investigation. The danger inherent in this position is that "verbal message," to use Nettler's term (1970: 21), will become an acceptable "methodological" criterion that will, on the one hand, give a feigned scientific respectability to the concept and, on the other hand, restore it to the social sciences with all its problematic historical roots in theology, philosophy, and literature.

## II. The "Bundle" and the "Bundled" Conceptualization of the "Self"

Implied in the foregoing discussion of a single as opposed to multiplicity of selves is the perennial problem of the simultaneous conceptualization of the "self" as an object, on the one side, and as an agent, on the other side. This takes us back to the philosophical controversy treated before in Chapter III. In this chapter, the meaning of "self" was explored on two levels: first, the "self" as the "bundle" or a central agency within the individual that "knows," "wills," "acts," "wants," etc. That is, "self" as agent, subject, or doer. Second, the "self" as the "bundled" or "objectified" or a collection of various perceptions or elementary selves, i.e. the "self concept."

Since the validity of the experimental research pertaining to the second meaning has been critically evaluated by Wylie (1961), the present research will raise the focal question it attempts to



investigate: Is the "self," in the first meaning, necessary for social-psychological research? The answer to this question will be deferred to the end of this chapter after a sample of the usages of "self" is briefly surveyed. This survey will not be exhaustive. It is intended only to serve as a stepping-stone for raising some theoretical features of self-theory.

Convenient summaries of the different usages of "self" are found in Hall and Lindzey (1970), Wylie (1961, 1968), Allport (1960), and Miller (1963). There is an apparent agreement in the literature that the differentiation of the "self" from other similar concepts and the ambiguity of the functions assigned to it have led to a great confusion in the literature. This conclusion is described (Hall and Lindzey, 1970; Sherif, 1968) as a conflict between two existing camps of self-theorists, those who differentiate between the concept of "self" and the concept of "ego" and those who use them interchangeably. It is our view that, in addition to these two camps, there exists a third majority group that employs the term "self" interchangeably with other alternative terms (ego, person, personality, identity) without even caring to make any discrimination or to assert any qualification among the terms used. This is a dominant group that ordinarily leaves the meaning of "self" assumed or taken for granted. A detailed presentation of the finer distinctions, or lack of them, between the two concepts "self" and "ego" is unnecessary. A vital point, however, will be documented: Regardless of the nonexistence of a precisely crystalized definition of "self," the term has been expanded, by those who do not make a distinction between "self" and "ego," to cover a



large variety of phenomena including the "superego"; Sherif and Sherif (1969) provides an example. The original Freudian definition of the ego is mangled in a manner that suits the research interest of these investigators and at the same time helps them avoid the cumbersome task of clarifying the theoretical ambiguities. In contrast, some humanistic psychologists and symbolic interactionists do make distinctions that reject the Freudian ego as portraying a dehumanizing image of man (Blumer, 1969a; Kovacs, 1968; Meltzer, 1967). All in all, the crucial theme seems to be this: Those who do not make the distinction between "ego" and "self" find it convenient to avoid the perplexities entangled in terminological clarifications or definitional interpretations, while those who make the distinction end up adding more problematic aspects to the semantic jungle which characterizes the literature on the "self" as an agent. The outcome of this predicament is a call for new labels; a characteristic of the social sciences discussed in Chapter IV. A quotation from Sherif (1968) illustrates the point.

"In view of this terminological malaise, it might be preferable to discard the label 'self' and 'ego,' fraught as they are with historical entanglements, and to use new terms not so encumbered" (Sherif, 1968: 152).<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, Allport (1965) has already proposed the term "proprium" to replace the "self" and "ego" concepts. Strangely enough, it was Allport, the recognized humanistic psychologist, who warned against the coining of new labels as a weary and evasive solution to the underlying problems (Allport, 1968). It was also Allport himself who affirmed that our conceptual flexibility is



greater than our methodological flexibility and who cautioned the followers of the humanist-existentialist school (to which one could add the symbolic interactionists) that they have not been methodologically or empirically productive. Allport refers to the readmission of the "self" in socio-psychological theories as an example of our conceptual flexibility. Therefore, the major question becomes: What does this dominance of conceptual flexibility indicate? It is reflective of three fallacies that permeate the current socio-psychological theorizing about the "self." These fallacies are:

1. The jingle fallacy, i.e. if two things are called by the same name, then they are believed to be the same things.
2. The jangle fallacy, i.e. if two things are named differently, then they are assumed or thought to be different.
3. The reification fallacy, i.e. if an abstraction is invented, it must have an observable referent.

These three fallacies are manifested in literature on the "self" as a central organizing agency. This is attested in the frequency with which the "self" is used to mean many things without any articulated or agreed-upon meaning. Some of these "self" meanings are: "object of awareness, name, bodily feelings, axis of meaning, controller of activity or intention, a product of social relationships" (Miller, 1963); "a reflexive product of social interaction" (Cottrell, 1968); "role, person-personality, identity" (Sherif, 1968); "the totality of all that a person calls his" (James, 1950); "sense of identity" (Guardo, 1968); "self-as-being, self-as-doing" (Farnham-Diggory, 1966); "core of our being" (Allport, 1965); "a set of



attitudes" (Kuhn and McPartland, 1954); "a generic term referring to a specific human personality" (Combs and Soper, 1957); "experience or feeling of totality" (Redfearn, 1969); "the whole person of an individual including his body and body parts as well as his psychic organization and its parts" (Jacobson, 1965); "a person's total subjective environment" (Hamacheck, 1971). The list is endless. It confirms Curtis's (1915) remark about an intelligent working man whom he questioned about the meaning of "I." This man's answer was: "Conundrum, ain't it?" (Curtis, 1915: 73).

The diversified current notions concerning the "self" establish one conclusion: Consistency in the usage of the term does not exist among self-theorists and it is unlikely that it will emerge in the future. The discouragement, disappointment, or uneasiness this conclusion bears motivates some critics to speculate about enforcing by fiat standard definitions of the "self." This type of speculation is rejected even by those who propose it (Hall and Lindzey, 1970). The question over and over again rotates around the necessity of the concept of "self" in its first meaning and/or the qualification of its applicability. This question is tied to the Cartesian "problem of the knower" which Allport (1965: 128) discusses. According to him, the introduction of the "self" as "an inner agent who pulls the strings" is outside the domain of scientific analysis. Allport declares that, although this concept might have been significantly useful in philosophy or theology, it may turn out to be a stumbling-block in social-psychological theorizing because of its question-begging.



"It is temptingly easy to assign functions that are not fully understood to a mysterious central agency, and then declare that 'it' performs in such a way as to unify the personality and maintain its integrity" (Allport, 1955: 36).<sup>3</sup>

Allport's viewpoint is comparable to Skinner's, presented in Chapter II, concerning the "inevitable abolition" of the concept of "autonomous man" that is used as a hypothetical cause of action (Skinner, 1953, 1971). To the amazement of the humanistic theorists, among whom Allport is classified, Allport thinks that "a homunculus may creep" into the scientific analysis of personality.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, he opposes the notion of self as an agent or a doer that performs psychological processes such as acting, intending, solving problems, etc. His suggestion is to limit the "self" (or ego) to be used only in "compound form." He gives credibility only to self-referential constructs. It is needless to argue at length that self-referential constructs themselves can assume an extreme generality and become thereby weak explanatory tools. Wylie's conclusion that only specific "self" constructs referring to specified attributes have scientific utility sustains its validity. This conclusion itself raises doubts about the necessity of Wylie's own later suggestion (1968) of a "generic self" concept.

### III. The Historical Context of the "Self" as an Agent

The preoccupation with the derivative meanings of the "self" as an agent forces us to examine its historical context. This enterprise has been undertaken by Claus (1970a) in his Psyche: A Study in the Language of Self Before Plato. His work is a beautiful



example of how the two concepts of "psyche" and "self," that are frequently used interchangeably in modern socio-psychological theories, historically have contrasting meanings.

Claus carried out a semantic study of the single word "psyche" in order to investigate "whether or not a developing idea of the self was associated before Plato with the word psyche" (Claus, 1970a: 14). He examines the transition from the Homeric notions of "psyche" to the Platonic ideas of the "self" as a rational and responsible psychological agent. It is said that the Homeric conception of "psyche" "begins with the belief in the existence of a living being inside man." It is also maintained that the Homeric use of "psyche" shows diversity and ambiguity of meaning (Claus, 1970a: 82-83). "Psyche," to the end of the fifth century B.C., remained "one of the most 'demonic' of all the personal psychological agents which may affect man" (Claus, 1970a: 95). The significance of attributing demonic activities to "psyche" is traced in detail. It is shown how "psyche" was associated with various forms of "unnatural" mental activity such as prophecy, Dionysian seizure, and poetic inspiration. Six popular usages of "psyche" in the fifth century B.C. are extrapolated. To illuminate the confusion with which the contemporary socio-psychological literature on the "self" as an agent is impregnated, especially in the two emerging perspectives of humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism, these meanings deserve mention.

1. "Psyche" as "life spirit": "Psyche" in the fifth century B.C. was understood as a demonic agent or a separate being possessing life of its own and mental capacities surpassing the normal.



2. "Psyche" as "seat of courage": This usage of "psyche" regularly pointed to a force which embodies violent emotional qualities such as boldness, passion, pride, arrogance. (One could use Maslow's term "higher qualities.")

3. "Psyche" as "seat of feeling": This usage identified "psyche" as source of deep feelings in the person such as "grief and suffering occurring at moments of greatest extremity." "Psyche" was also perceived as involved "in relationships where its possessor feels intense sympathy and concern for others." (Compare this with the commitment to "the dignity of man" in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism.)

4. "Psyche" as "character": "Psyche" was viewed as "the bearer of the personality and character of man." ("Psyche," or the "self" in today's terminology, is not infrequently used interchangeably with "personality" or "character.")

5. "Psyche" as "life": "Psyche" carried over its meaning as "life," in the sense of vital force or essence, from the archaic age into the fifth century B.C. The Homeric emphasis on the concreteness of the word was preserved.

6. "Psyche" as "self" in lyric poetry: There are seven occurrences of "psyche" in the lyric poetry and tragedy referring to it as the "self" or "character" of man reflecting "an incipient transformation into a seat of normal mental and emotional processes bordering on the self."

With astonishment, one might posit the legitimate question: How far did our present knowledge regarding the concept of "psyche" or



"self" advance? The imprecise usage and interchangeability of the term "psyche" with "self," as well as the conglomeration of many other meanings of "self," prompt us to doubt the existence of an awareness on the part of many self-theorists of the historical transformation of the "psyche" into "self" and the implications this transformation entails. The emphasis on the uniqueness of "self" in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism corresponds to the same emphasis on "psyche" in the archaic age and the fifth century B.C. This uniqueness bestows upon "self" or "psyche" certain attributes that furnish ready-made explanations of certain human behavioral phenomena. The "explanatory readiness" is exhibited in the conceptualization of the "psyche" in the fifth century B.C. on two levels:

1. The conceptualization of "psyche" as a separate being, or "life spirit" "which acts on rather than as part of the conscious psychological life" (Claus, 1970a: 165).
2. The conceptualization of "psyche" as a physical "vital essence" or "vital force" which drives its possessor.

Later on in this chapter we are going to challenge Hall and Lindzey's conclusion that the "self" in today's theorizing is not employed as "a psychic agent or 'inner manikin' which regulates man's actions." It appears that these two levels of conceptualization in the fifth century B.C., are implicated by current "self" theories distinctively in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism. Both of these conceptualizations are linked with the previously stated six meanings of "psyche." It seems that the contemporary conceptualization of the "self" as an agent has not significantly



improved over the fifth century B.C. conceptualization. The humanistic psychologists and the symbolic interactionists are resuscitating a theoretical tradition or heritage whose origin extends back to the archaic age and the fifth century B.C. Regardless of the justification of this revival, the words "psyche" and "self" are used as the primary motivators of human action. There is an astonishing similarity between the fifth century "psyche" and the modern resurrected agency of "self."

In contrast to the "essentialist" or "spiritual" qualities incurred upon the nature of man as a valuing organism in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism, the historical evidence enveloping the concept of "psyche" displays that Democritus, Heraclitus, and the Medical Writer appraised the material nature of "psyche" against Platonic dualism. To these social philosophers "psyche" was identified as a "physical reality" or "bodily substance" to be treated in a scientific way. It was toward the end of the fifth century B.C., and only after its elimination from popular usage as an archaic and poetic term, that "psyche" lost its demonic character. Claus's phraseology of the issue is worth presenting:

"It is thus arguable that if there was any gradual evolution in the meaning of psyche the word began to achieve importance in the conscious life not as it was defined as something other than the body, but as its inherited association with the 'otherness' of the menos-like force, and the occult 'life' spirit, were suppressed" (Claus, 1970a: 245).

This quotation accentuates the revolution in the meaning of "psyche" that occurred at the end of the fifth century B.C. This occurrence left for Socrates and Plato the establishment of the true dualism of soul and body. "Soul" or "self" in Platonic philosophy was



thereafter "defined as the real man as opposed to the body" (Claus, 1970a: 16). This Platonic spiritualism subsequently had its lasting influence on social thought extending from St. Augustine's faith in a spiritual substance to Descartes' attempt to demonstrate the existence of this substance through his approach of "methodological doubt" and eventually to Hume's "bundle theory" that discredited the existence of "self" as a single entity. The final outcome has been a continuing conflict between the two philosophical traditions, empiricism and rationalism.

A reference to the essentialist tradition was made when discussing William James, whose conclusion about the ineffectiveness of the explanatory power of the "self" as conceptualized in this tradition was recorded. Parenthetically, mention should be made that both humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism share a regression to the Jamesian psychology. This observation about James returns us to the theme of this chapter about the conflictive conceptions of "self."

#### IV. "Self-as-Object" versus "Self-as-Process"

Gergen's research, it was said, confirmed the Jamesian hypothesis regarding the multiplicity of selves. At any rate, the central feature in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism is not the identification of fragmentary selves but the assertion and romanticization of an all-inclusive "self" that has its origin in the essentialist philosophical tradition. (The only difference is the claim of being "scientific" or "empirical" in both perspectives.) It is this distinctive notion of the "self" that is being restored to the



social sciences nowadays after a demise in the behaviorist-positivist tradition. Both orientations are reviving the Platonic outlook on the nature of man as being unique by virtue of possessing an essentialist substance or entity called the "self," whose acceptance in both perspectives does not hinge on empirical or even hypothetical grounds, but on the dogmatic assertion of something called the "self" as if it were "real." Therefore, it is not uncommon to find a tendency toward the reification of the concept in both perspectives.

This reification of the "self" in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism impels us to critically evaluate Hall and Lindzey's dissension (1970) that will be quoted because of its cardinal relevance to the present query.

"It should be pointed out and clearly understood that no modern theory of the self holds that there is a psychic agent or 'inner manikin' which regulates man's actions. The self, whether it be conceived as an object or as process or both, is not an homunculus or 'man within the breast or soul'; rather it refers to the object of the psychological processes or to those processes themselves; and these principles are assumed to be governed by the principle of causality. In other words, the self is not a metaphysical or religious concept; it is a concept that falls within the domain of scientific psychology" (Hall and Lindzey, 1970: 516).

In direct contrast to the allegation in this quotation, we have been assembling evidentiary support for an opposite interpretation of the current trends about the self as an agent or "process" as it is manifested in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism. Our opposition may be summarized as follows:

1. There is an agreement in the literature on the "self" as an object or structure, i.e. the self-concept. The literature in this



area has been aptly reviewed by Wylie (1961) who points out the confusion that prevails. The stand adopted in the previous chapters and the present one has been to corroborate Wylie's major conclusion that only self-referent constructs with specifiable attributes have a promising scientific utility.

2. While there is consensus about the two principal meanings of the term "self," (agent and object), the ancient philosophical riddle surrounding the first meaning is perpetuated. For instance, in Chapter II it has been demonstrated that Hume's "bundle theory of the self," (self-as-object) was not acceptable because the question of "selfhood" persists even if one consents to Hume's proclamation that he does not find anything except different perceptions. The contention will still be raised that there is an implicit acknowledgment of "someone" or "somebody" finding one type of perception rather than another. It was upheld that the extension of "self" to the level of an agent renders it vulnerable to empirical sterility and, in essence, serves to give a "rounded explanation." This type of explanation, it was maintained, loses its modes of distinguishing because of the extreme generality and applicability of its concepts. Hence, the proposition was advanced that the "self" as an inner integrating or unifying agent may have become a vacuous umbrella term applying to a wide variety of phenomena and reinforcing the jingle, jangle and reification fallacies in social-psychological theorizing.

3. In the presentation of the symbolic interactionists, it was seen that James' treatment of the problem of the "self" was ambiguously circumvented by his postulate of the stream of consciousness. His



attempt was to establish the verifiability of "personal selves" by resorting to the subjective feeling of continuity among the states of consciousness; recognized today as "identity" and used interchangeably with the "self" in many writings. James evaded the vital point of contention which is the specification of the nature of selfhood, or of the "Pure Ego" or the "Thinker." From a methodological point of view, James's solution is inadequate (Gergen, 1971). The symbolic interactionists' conflict between nurturing a conception of a "pluralism of selves" and struggling at the same time to postulate a unified sense of "self" has been brought to attention. At a theoretical level the proposition of a unified "self" in symbolic interactionism might look attractive, while at a methodological level the meaning of "self" is usually confined to the "self" as an object or the "Me" (Cottrell, 1969; Kinch, 1967; Kuhn and McPartland, 1954; Tucker, 1966). This kind of operationalization tends to be uncongenial to the formulations and intentions of the original expounders of the orientation. In short, there exists empirical corroboration for the "Me" or "self-as-object" defined as a collection of "self" perceptions or attitudes. One can measure this reference, however poorly. The problem of the "self" as "knower" or the "I" remains a topic of philosophical speculation.

4. In the treatment of the humanistic theorists there was an endeavour to show that they are propounding philosophical postulates under the pretext of their being empirical findings or generalizations (facts) about the "noble" nature of man and his "basic needs." Their appeal to science, it was displayed, was an alien component in their



argument to bring into the social sciences a chronically romanticized notion of the "self."

5. Throughout the preceding chapters, an exposition of the "self" in the humanistic-interactionist perspectives was engaged with consideration of the implications these perspectives have for the model of man in the contemporary philosophy of the social sciences. They forcefully voice a condemnation of the behavioristic-psychoanalytic models and foster the substitution of a "new" model committed to man as having "worth and dignity." An illustration of this emerging model is found in Maslow, The Psychology of a Science (1966); Bugental, The Search for Authenticity (1965b); Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science (1970); Lyon, Psychology and the Measure of Man (1963); van Kaam, Existential Foundation of Psychology (1966); Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method (1969a); and Coulson and Rogers, Man and the Science of Man (1968).

The "self" in the proposed model of man does not escape the charge of homunculism. In exemplification of this charge and in reaction to the aforementioned contention of Hall and Lindzey, a quotation from McCurdy's Personality and Science (1965) is noteworthy:

"Self, as I understand it, means that which is capable of asserting, 'I am.' It is not anything like a 'self-concept' or a 'body-ego.' It is an active power which thinks, wills, and perceives, and expresses itself in form and motion, but it is not form or motion. I regard it as a real thing, though not in its essence perceptible or measurable, and as always mentally active, though with varying degrees of consciousness. The assertions I am making about self are somewhat like those of John Locke when using the same term, and still more like G.W. von Leibniz when referring to monad or soul" (McCurdy, 1965: 11).



In other words, "self-as-process" is not simply employed as a group of psychological processes, as Hall and Lindzey want us to believe, but as a determinant of these processes. Its chief function is "to pull the strings." Against such an invented agent, Allport (1965), Hilgard (1949), Skinner (1971), and others have warned us, apparently in vain.

6. Although some "self" theorists make the distinction between "self-as-object" and "self-as-process," they do not in actuality adhere to it. Their distinction is a reflection of an awareness of a theoretical difficulty whose resolution in practice does not look attainable. Two examples in mind are:

- a. Sherif and Cantril's conceptualization of "self-as-object" and "ego-as-process" (Scheerer, 1948).
- b. The symbolic interactionists' usage of "self" as both "structure" and "process" and its restriction to the "structure" conceptualization ("self" defined as a set of "self-attitudes") at a methodological or operational level.

7. In their exposition of Adler's "creative self," Hall and Lindzey themselves admit that it is presented as a "prime mover" of human action and "is not unlike the older concept of the soul" (Hall and Lindzey, 1970: 127). The Adlerian "creative self" is not dissimilar to the "real self" in the humanistic-interactionist perspectives. William James himself gave prominence to the "spiritual self."

In sum, our stand is in disagreement with Hall and Lindzey's interpretation concerning the "self" as an active group of psychological processes such as remembering, thinking and perceiving. The "self-as-process" in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism



stands for a single independent entity that is perceived as the locus of causality. As such, this conceptualization of the "self" continues to be question-begging. It conveniently attributes any unexplainable experiential or behavioral phenomenon to the agency of "self." Again, this usage raises the question: Is the "self" as an agent necessary for social-psychological theorizing? A celebrated humanistic psychologist has himself suggested the answer when he said that "I greatly fear that the lazy tendency to employ self or ego as a factotum to repair the ravages of positivism may do more harm than good" (Allport, 1955: 38).

Reference has been made to Schaar's observation about the transformation of the crisis of "self" from philosophy into the social sciences. This transformation signifies a subtle justification for the employment of "self" as an agent that comprises a response to the prevailing crisis of values in western society. This thesis will be argued in the following chapter.



FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The best illustration of this is found in Moustakas's article, "The Sense of Self," Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1961: 20-34). In this article, the "self" is described as a "mystery" that is marvelled for the sheer sensing of mystery as such. See also McCurdy, The Personal World (1961: 186-196).

<sup>2</sup>Sherif himself continues to use the two terms interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup>For an illustration of the unifying function of the self, consult C. Buhler's article, "The Integrating Self," in C. Buhler (ed.), The Course of Human Life (1968).

<sup>4</sup>Wylie (1968) maintains that Allport's "proprium" has some of the qualities of the homunculus inside the man. That is, Allport, plus other self-theorists, are aware of the tendency to reify the "self" and, therefore, they are cautious in pointing out that they do not subscribe to the charge of reification. See Wylie's article, "The Present Status of Self Theory," in Borgatta and Lambert, Handbook of Personality and Research (1968).



## CHAPTER VII

### THE "SELF" AS A THERAPEUTIC RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS OF VALUES IN WESTERN SOCIETY

#### I. Introduction

In the preceding chapter evidence was presented showing that the "self" as an agent is viewed in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism as the locus of causality to which unexplainable behavioral or experiential phenomena could be imputed. This is not dissimilar to the principal function played by the ancient concept of "soul." In this chapter, our major effort will be the marshalling of evidence regarding a second function that the popularized notion of "self" as an agent has taken over from the traditional concept of "soul." This function concerns the provision of an inner sense of security and the achievement of "psychological warmth." Our thesis is that the postulation of the "self" as an agent is a therapeutic response to the prevailing crisis of values in western society.

We should qualify from the beginning that while this function of the "self" is distinctly confirmable in humanistic psychology, it is implicitly discernible in symbolic interactionism.<sup>1</sup> Maybe one should conjecture that the situation is as such because the humanistic psychologists are explicitly stating their impugnment of the two dominant models of man, the behavioristic and psychoanalytic, and vigorously pronouncing their commitment to man as a creature of "freedom, worth and dignity." One might even say that the objectives



of humanistic psychology are overstated for its expounders conceive of themselves as "deviants" or "heretics" sponsoring a social movement in the social sciences that is quickly gaining recognition.<sup>2</sup>

If students of the social sciences are aware that sociology has been modelling itself after psychology with respect to its search for "scientific" respectability, then they might accept our interpretation of the latency of the "revolt" in sociology. A "humanistic revolt" in sociology, we anticipate, will be more stringently championed after humanistic psychology secures an appreciable degree of momentum.<sup>3</sup> The first sign of this prediction about the future of sociology is the currency of the symbolic interactionist perspective itself in the last two or three decades and the increasing popularity of the "reflexive self" as "the sovereign entity, the rock on which approaches to reality are founded" (Nisbet, 1972: 53). Gouldner's (1970) call for a "reflexive sociology" is another supportive indication of our prediction about the future of sociology.

In summary, the disciplines of psychology and sociology are in crisis. The resolution of this crisis, as proposed by an emerging group of "humanist" psychologists and sociologists, lies in the restoration of the "self" and the accentuation of the subjective character of "scientific" pursuits. In the previous chapters, we implied that this resolution is inadequate for it means the transportation of the crisis of the "self" from philosophy into the social sciences. In other terms, the prevailing crisis in the current social sciences is not soluble by the adoption of what has been, and continues to be, a crisis in philosophy, i.e. the problem of selfhood,



subjecthood, the "I," or the "knower." Hence, the remarkable resurgence of the "self" as an agent will be dealt with as a subtle justification for solving modern man's need for what might be labelled a "spiritual rebirth." This need is linked with the emphasis of the "self-actualization" theorists on Western Man's uninterrupted search for the approval of others, his blind conformity to societal expectations under the auspices of automatic progress, and his feeling of insignificance and worthlessness. To these theorists, man has been victimized. The same verdict is implicitly acknowledged in symbolic interactionism (e.g. Blumer, 1969). This observation demands an examination of the contemporary scene.

## II. Some Reflections on the Contemporary Scene

The chaotic conditions of the contemporary scene bring about an urgency to question and to reformulate the existing recurrent themes, values, norms, and aspirations. For instance, the "death of God" has given rebirth to other "Absolutes" which are serving similar functions. The disappearance of the faith in a transcendental reality is replaced by the reappearance of other beliefs such as the construction of a universal society of mankind, or the struggle to discover the "Real Self," or the shaping of the "Good Person" and the "Good Society." Diversified responses to the tragicomedy of present life range from alienation and apathy to total absorption in "herd conformity," to "violent indignation," or to a "psychedelic trip."<sup>4</sup> "Good people," while keeping a curtain between themselves and the "dirt doers," are visualized as the owners of the dirty wishes.



Revolutions are acquiring various kinds of adjectives.<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding, all of them have a unifying single demand: A new conception of man, i.e. the restoration of his "dignified image." Radicalism itself has procured a curative function (Nisbet, 1972). In the midst of this confusion, however, we find a pressing call for "a sociology of evil" (Wolff, 1969; Coser, 1969).

One is reminded at this stage of the game of the fact that man's existential conflict in the "good old days" was revolving around the question of how he ought to live. As a consequence, one cannot avoid but asking: Is he not confronting the same ancient question again? Is he not postulating the same medieval metaphysical assumptions about the ideal nature of man and society and the necessity of the transexperiential world? We were reminded in Chapter V that Ibn Khaldun was the first social thinker to transform the question into a discussion of how man actually lives. Can one, then, legitimately charge the humanistic movements in the social sciences with retreating to the pre-Khaldunic premises and speculations? Fromm (1967), one of the most renowned humanistic thinkers, draws an exquisite picture of how modern man sells himself in the "personality market." He insists that this is a new orientation that started only in the current era. Intellectual curiosity would tempt one to posit the question: Did not man sell himself, to God or to the Devil, in the past? Perhaps, it is better to rephrase the question in this fashion: Have "monetary values" superseded "spiritual values" while man is continuing to sell "himself?" Modern man's personality (or "self"), Luft (1957) informs us, is a salable commodity having a



price attached to it.

### III. The Human Situation in Contemporary Western Society: Major Recurrent Themes

According to Fromm (1967a), there are three fundamental existential dichotomies. The first is that between life and death. That is, the realization that death is inevitable. Related to this is a second dichotomy which stresses that the short span of man's life does not permit the complete actualization of human potentialities. The third existential dichotomy is that man is alone, as a unique individual, yet he craves for belongingness. It is Fromm's attempt, thereafter, to show that there are two types of character structure or orientation, the productive and the non-productive. His thesis is that maturity in character and integration in personality originate from the productive, self-actualizing character that is the source of virtue. Vice, in contrast, is one's indifference to one's own "self"; a term whose meaning is assumed as given. One type of non-productivity is the "marketing orientation." This orientation, it is argued, is a new development based on the economic function of the "market" in contemporary western society. Since it has relevance to the theme of the present chapter, it will be discussed briefly.

The above-mentioned orientation is defined as: "the experience of oneself as a commodity and one's value as exchange value" (Fromm, 1967a: 76). Personality, i.e. self, becomes a commodity to be sold in the "personality market." The underlying requirement is "to be in demand." Success becomes dependent on the price received. Yet, this price is not usually given in accordance with the scale of human



qualities like "decency," "integrity," "honesty," or other "higher qualities" in the humanistic theorists' language, but on the skill to "sell oneself," to conform, and to please. Concomitant with this is the emergence of a growing sense of futility, powerlessness, and insignificance. In order to overcome these feelings, the individual ceases to be himself and entirely incorporates the personality bestowed upon him. Nevertheless, "the escape does not restore his lost security, but only helps him to forget his self as a separate entity. He finds new and fragile security at the expense of sacrificing the integrity of his individual self" (Fromm, 1967b: 238). To sum up, the typical picture Fromm draws of modern man, and which is the predominant treatise of every work of his follows:

"Today we come across a person who acts and feels like an automaton; who never experiences anything that is really his; who experiences himself entirely as the person he thinks he is supposed to be; whose artificial smile replaced genuine laughter; whose meaningless chatter has replaced communicative speech; whose dulled despair has taken the place of genuine pain" (Fromm, 1955: 16).

May, following Fromm's same line of thinking, calls the twentieth century the "age of anxiety." While he himself is a true believer in "self-realization" as the recommended therapy for the crisis of our time, he raises a very insightful question: "How can anyone undertake the long development toward self-realization in a time when practically nothing is certain, either in the present, or in the future" (May, 1967: vii). He lists several underlying factors responsible for the spiritual bankruptcy of the twentieth-century man. Two of them are of special interest.



1. The loss of guiding values in western society.
2. The loss of the sense of "self"; i.e. "the loss of worth or dignity of the human being" (May, 1967: 49).

To summarize, May presents a "preface to love" which will eventually culminate, he hopes, in the rediscovery of the "self." In his opinion, one of the chief restraints for modern man's inability to "love" is Fromm's previously mentioned "marketing orientation." He, like Fromm, preaches that to "love" is an art and is the "atonement."

Maslow's claim about the generation of a new image of man has been previously discussed (see Chapters I, II, and V). He shares Weinberg's (1967) views that the two "Ultimate Big Problems" are:

1. To make the "Good Person" - defined as the "self-evolving person, the responsible for himself-and-for-his-own evolution person, the fully illuminated person, the self-actualizing..." (Maslow, 1969: 732).
2. To make the "Good Society" - meaning the "ultimately one species, one world."

In short, the humanistic theorists' description of the existential situation in modern society is this: Modern man has lost his "real self" whose resurrection is the recommended therapy for overcoming his feelings of futility, powerlessness, victimization, and lack of faith. Through the "method of love and care," described in Chapter V, the humanistic theorists want us to believe that the restoration of the "real self" is attainable. The relevance of the symbolic interactionists to this dilemma will be briefly traced through James, Cooley and Mead.



A characteristic common to James, Cooley and Mead, is their claim to be primarily concerned with pragmatic problems; a preoccupation that urged them to project an alleged aversion to metaphysical speculations. However, James' prominent recognition of consciousness as the subject matter of psychology is noteworthy for the "spectre of consciousness" is once again "haunting the contemporary mind" (Nisbet, 1972: 53). Modern man's search for a "spiritual recovery" will definitely direct its mainstreams towards James for "he certainly is a man for the terrible and bewildering season that is upon us" (Lewis, 1969: 73). His writings, along with the writings of the humanistic theorists, will meet the "religious needs of intellectuals," to use Sanford's (1969) terms.

In addition to the relevance of James to the contemporary scene, Cooley and Mead have their share. Cooley's writings have striking similarities to those of the humanistic theorists. According to him, "an unhealthy self is at the heart of nearly all social discontent" (Cooley, 1964: 260). He, like the humanistic theorists, speaks of the "deep needs of human nature" classifying them into a hierarchy of "self-expression," "appreciation," and "reasonable security" (Cooley, 1964: 261). His description of some historical figures, i.e. Dante, Shakespeare, reminds one of Maslow's "self-actualizers" or "peakers." They are "large," "human," "inclusive," "feeling the depth of the world," and seekers of "self" growth or transformation "into higher and higher forms" (Cooley, 1964: 219). The contemporary preoccupation with consciousness makes Cooley's pertinence very obvious because of his assumption about the psychical nature of



society (mind is the locus of self and others). This assumption, as was reported in Chapter IV, was criticized by Mead whose relationship to the existing predicament in modern western society is explicated by Chambliss (1963) in his article, "Mead's Way Out of the Basic Dilemma of Modern Existential Thought." The theme of this article is to show that the meaning of man's existence, in Mead's perspective, derives from his participation in "acts of living" that have common meanings to the members of his society. This theme, we presume, integrates the humanistic theorists' search for the restitution of modern man's "lost self" with Mead's ideal for a "universal human society" (Mead's own terms, 1967: 310). The outcome of the integration is an amazingly utopian solution: "Let us embrace each other with 'love' (provided that 'love' will have a shared meaning for all of us) for that is the only exit out of our spiritual stagnation."

The optimism of this utopian aspiration should not blind us from the pessimism exhibited in another recurrent theme in modern western society.

#### IV. "Good People" and the Perception of "Evil" or "Dirty Work"

In his interesting article entitled "Good People and Dirty Work," Everett Hughes addresses himself to the "most colossal and dramatic piece of social dirty work the world has ever known" (Hughes, 1962: 3). His purpose, he reminds us, is not to condemn the Germans, but to recall to our attention dangers which lurk in the midst always." He divides people into two types:

1. Good people who do not involve themselves in the dirty work.



2. Bad people who do the dirty work.

The intriguing question he raises is: To what extent are the "dirt doers" acting agents of the wishes of "good people?" Or, under what conditions would "good people" condone the "dirty work" done by others as necessary? A distinction is drawn between the "ingroup of good people" and "bad people" who are dissociated from them as an out-group.

"I venture to suggest that the higher and more expert functionaries who act in our behalf represent something of what we may consider our public wishes, while some of the others show a sort of concentration of those impulses of which we are or wish to be less aware" (Hughes, 1962: 9).

Hughes questions whether this phenomenon is a universal one. He discusses "dirty work" illustrating his conclusion with a variety of examples from the Nazi movement.<sup>6</sup>

Coser (1969) specifies the conditions under which the phenomenon of doing the "dirty work" operates. He upholds that the performance of "dirty acts" of violence requires a relative lack of visibility. This means that "good people," or the public, would remain unconcerned as long as the "dirty work" is kept away from their perceptual field. Only widespread public exposure would condemn doing the brutal deeds. He elucidates in his construction of the "span of sympathy." "In general, the perception of the humanness of the 'other' decreases with the increase in distance between the perceiver and the perceived" (Coser, 1969: 205). Distance refers not only to geographical distance, but to social and cultural distance as well. To summarize:

1. The greater the "distance," the less is the "span of



sympathy."

2. The more visible the "dirty work," the more the disruption in the stability of the private world of "good people" and, consequently, the more the use of rationalizations to justify the "dirty work."

Coser's thesis is that with increased visibility brought about by the fabulous improvement in mass media, "good people" will resort to the denial of common or shared humanity with the victim; (they are not like "us" and do not merit the sympathy we extend to our ingroup). If this succeeds, then an increasing brutalization is anticipated.

The anticipation of more brutalization is associated with Wolff's (1969) invitation "for a sociology of evil." His suggestion is particularly provocative because of the predicament that modern man confronts, i.e. his being caught between two conflicting worlds:

1. The transcendental world that is ordained by religious directives.

2. The world of "Absolutes" that have replaced God and in whose name many victims have been crucified.

The task of "a sociology of evil" is to study and interpret the various reactions to contemporary western society and to specify the corresponding characteristics of this society.<sup>7</sup> This, it is surmised, may carry the seeds for a necessary utopian society. We have endeavoured in the previous pages to show that the march toward this utopian ideal is already on the way.



V. Four Reactions to the Existential Predicament

Four significant reactions to the upheaval in standards and values in contemporary western society can be extrapolated. They represent a drastic shift from western man's concentration on the external world to an exploration of the inner world of the "self."

These reactions are:

1. Alienation.
2. The hippie movement.
3. A new attitude toward death.
4. Social movements.

Fromm (1955) traces the phenomenon of alienation to the drastic effect of capitalism on the individual. He defines it as "a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as alien"; i.e. estranged from himself and others. It is portrayed in the following manner:

"Everybody is to everybody else a commodity, always to be treated with certain friendliness, because even if he is not of use now, he may be later. There is not much love or hate to be found in human relations of our day. There is, rather, a superficial fairness, but behind that surface is distance and indifference. There is also a good deal of subtle distrust" (Fromm, 1955: 139).

To overcome the problem displayed in the quotation, the humanistic theorists are trying hard to "rehumanize" man by pushing him to search for authenticity; a term that is very dear to their hearts (e.g. Bugental, 1965b). Correspondingly, they are also aiming to "rehumanize" science by offering an alternative model to the dominant behavioristic-psychoanalytic models of man.



Other social scientists have defined alienation as the estrangement from the dominant values of the American society and the culture it carries (Nettler, 1957); encountering the "unreal" including the "self" (Wolff, 1969); a divorce of the individual from himself, or his failure to find his "real self" (Turner, 1969). Without embarking on a long discussion, suffice it to repeat Turner's declaration that it is the main symbol of contemporary society. (Perhaps the exploitation of the term itself is a contributing factor to the existing confusion.)

The second reaction is analyzed by Brickman (1968) as "a return to the death instinct" and, besides, a direct challenge to the cherished values, norms, and philosophical outlooks prevailing in western society. It is asserted that the psychedelically induced experience symbolizes the destruction of the "old acculturated self" and the rebirth of "a new self." It is concluded that only "a deep spiritual revolution will halt our seemingly headlong rush to oblivion" (Brickman, 1968: 772). The urgency of "a spiritual revolution," one should point out, is the kernel of humanistic psychology. It is intelligibly stated by Progoff (1970).

"The need for a humanistic psychology derives directly from the fact that we are living in a secular culture without a frame of values to guide us... We require a personal, psychological, spiritual, method that can save us as the thread to guide us through the labyrinth of modern life" (Progoff, 1970: 129).

The third reaction is that of "making a cult of repressing the recognition of death" (May, 1958: 48) which is proclaimed to play at the present period the same role that sex played in the Victorian age.



Of relevance here is Gorer's (1956) hypothesis that "natural death" has become relatively uncommon while "violent death" has increased and occupied the fantasies of mass audiences. Modern man, Choron (1964) affirms, faces his eventuality with much more difficulty than his forefathers did. The living belief in immortality and in future life that prevailed in earlier ages has become highly suspected today as an invention of the wishful thinking of primitive man (Freud, 1925). The consequent lack of religious faith gave birth to other substitutes such as the identification with mankind and the concern about its betterment, the passing of something "good" to the next generation, the satisfaction in helping others, the preoccupation with philosophy or science (one should not forget that social science is included), or the search for "authenticity" within one's "self."

The fourth reaction is very skillfully treated by Turner (1969). His thesis is that a new normative revision of modern man's sense of societal injustice is defiantly expressed.

"Today, for the first time in history, it is common to see violent indignation expressed over the fact that people lack a sense of personal worth - that they lack an inner peace of mind which comes from a sense of personal dignity or a clear sense of identity" (Turner, 1969: 395).

As the major symbol of the new era, Turner says, alienation has acquired a new meaning; the loss of a viable sense of "self." Concomitant with this is the emergence of "existentialism" as the philosophy of the "New Era." In conjunction with this, we should specify that the flourishing of "existentialism" as the philosophy of the day is not restricted to the constituency of the youth upon whom



Turner places his emphasis, for it has secured a surging support from some psychologists and sociologists. It surely meets their "humanitarian" concerns about the fate of man.

#### VI. Concluding Remarks

One implication that was suggested earlier in this chapter is that the "humanistic movement" in psychology and sociology is a way of going back to the pre-Khaldunic and existentially captivating question of how man ought to live. This puts us face to face with the all-embracing theme of the human situation: modern man is seized between his grief about a "dead God" and the dissatisfaction with the "Absolutes" that have displaced him. Consequently, he yearns for a "New Jerusalem" and craves for a "Promised Savior." The focal question becomes: Who is going to take over the functions that religion used to perform? Is it the "Real Self," the "Good Person," or the "Good Society?"

Our goal in this chapter was to show that the "self" as an inner activator, (whose definition remains ambiguously assumed), has been regaining prominence as a "Promised Savior." That is, the recovery of this "self," it is optimistically thought, will ultimately set things right. We believe that the description of modern man's search for a "soul" is not invalid (Jung, 1933; Hollander, date not mentioned; Fair, 1969). This search, we predict, will continue under the banner of "humanistic movements" in the social sciences. It is not surprising to us to find one of the humanistic theorists summarizing the meaning of "existential psychology" by saying: "It



restores our divinity" (Bugental, 1965b: 20). This view is shared by Maslow's emphasis on "peak experiences" as "core religious experiences" and by Cardno's (1966) characterization of "humanistic psychology" as theology "to those who have no religious beliefs, and atheism to those who have." It is also manifested in the recent integrational ventures between Western social-psychological thoughtways and Eastern mysticism (Raju and Castell, 1968; Sinha, 1965; Aird, 1968; Weisskopf-Joelson, 1970).

All kinds of speculative answers, extending from the empirical study of subjective values to the expectation of more brutalization, can be given as the outcome of our uncertainty about the prevailing crisis of values. One thing is certain, however: The ostracism of the "self" in the positivist-behaviorist tradition has been challenged. The heresay of yesterday is becoming the therapeutic theology of today. Jung (1933) advises us that in his treatment of hundreds of patients over a period of thirty-five years "there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life" (Jung, 1933: 229). In support of this observation, Raju and Castell (1968) tell us that, due to the indifference displayed in philosophy and science to religion, "it is only depth psychology that becomes the source of our information about the self" (Raju and Castell, 1968: VIII).



FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> It is our prediction that in the coming decade or two this function of the "self" will be accentuated particularly if the "Chicago School" of interactionism dominates. This school continues the classical Meadian tradition. Its image of man dictates its methodology. For further elaboration consult Meltzer and Petras's article, "The Chicago and Iowa Schools of Symbolic Interactionism," in Manis and Meltzer Symbolic Interaction, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 2nd edition, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> This point was elaborated by Floyd Matson in a lecture entitled "Third Force Psychology: The Humanist Frame" given at the invitation of The Theoretical Psychology Center, The University of Alberta (October 10, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> After a period of ten years, Humanistic Psychology became a recognized division of the American Psychological Association.

<sup>4</sup> Belonging to this context is H. Zinn's complaint about the maldistribution of justice and the need for the expenditure of more "intellectual energy" to the solution of vital social problems. See Nettler's reply to Zinn in Nettler's Explanations (1970: 188).

<sup>5</sup> For illustration see the following: H. Brickman, "The Psychedelic 'Hip Scene': Return to the Death Instinct," American Journal of Psychiatry 125 (1968: 766-772); E. Fromm, The Revolution of Hope (1968); H. Harman, "The New Copernican Resolution," Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Vol. IX, No. 2 (1969: 127-134); P. Hauser, "The Chaotic Society: Product of the Social Morphological Revolution," American Sociological Review, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1969: 1-18); A. Maslow, "Toward a Humanistic Psychology," American Psychologist, Vol. 24, No. 8 (1969: 724-735); and S. Jourard, "A Humanistic Revolution in Psychology," in R. Guthrie Psychology in the World Today (Addison-Wesley, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> Paradoxically enough, however, his conversation with the German school-teacher and the German architect reveals, to me at least, that he himself can be accused of being an example of what he is talking about. In other terms, he protested against the school-teacher's statement regarding the fact that the Jews have now Palestine by saying: "Palestine would hardly hold them." Surprisingly, one might ask: Did he "forget" to protest against the solution of a tragedy by committing another tragedy? That is, the displacement of



the Palestinian Arabs.

<sup>7</sup> See Nettler's review of Sanford et al. Sanctions for Evil, Contemporary Sociology, Vol. 1, No. 4 (July: 348-349). One of Nettler's conclusions is particularly relevant.

"It follows that evil remains our possibility as long as men have different tastes, interests, and loyalties. The perpetual dilemma persists: that moral movements produce the very separations of man from man they are designed to cure."



## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### I. "Who Am I?" - The Enigmatic Question in Humanistic Psychology and Symbolic Interactionism

The preceding chapter has focused on the underlying theme of the present research: Both modern western man and the social sciences, exemplified by psychology and sociology, are groping for solutions to their anxieties. The moral questions encompassing these anxieties are believed to be conquerable by "facts" and presentable as "scientific." The degree of anxiety involved in such anticipatory situations has been partially minimized due to our optimistic "definition of the situation." That is, the situation to modern western man and to the disciplines of psychology and sociology has been structured. Structure in itself, we students of the social sciences have been taught, is a contributing factor in the reduction of anxiety and uncertainty. The structure in this context refers to the delineation of the goal: What saves us is, allegedly, the restitution of "authenticity," "the Real Self," "consciousness," or "subjectivity." The social sciences went astray, the humanistic revitalists would argue, because they relinquished their concern about man and robbed him of his freedom, dignity and worth, which are his unique attributes. The solution, therefore, is clear: Let us reform the social sciences and restore man to his proper place as the king of the animal kingdom and the center of the universe.



This summary of the predicament of modern western man and the social sciences refers to the issue of "beyond freedom and dignity" versus "back to freedom and dignity" that we discussed in Chapter II. This issue seems to be the central problem with which the disciplines of psychology and sociology are confronted in the present era. The basic question that concerns us is this: What are the implications of this conflict?

As was suggested in Chapter I, the answer to this question will be handled on two levels:

1. The level of "self" and "self-constructs" with reference to their scientific utility and potential applicability.

2. The level of the social sciences with attention to the intriguing question of whether the "new science of the subjective" is in actuality a "new thrust" or merely an "old wine in new wineskins."

With reference to the "self" as an internal agency, we have managed to show that "the Cartesian problem of the knower" is still with us. We traced its ancestry not only to the Platonic essentialist tradition, but also to the "psyche" of the fifth century B.C. It was maintained that the problem is basically philosophical and that the postulation of the subjecthood of the "self" has been fruitless at an empirical level. In other terms, "homunculism" characterizes the literature on the "self" as an agent. The "I" or "self as knower" remains as mystical as it was to David Hume. The best description of this situation was borrowed from the answer of a working man to a social scientist whose curiosity impelled him to ask a group of laymen about the meaning of the "I." This layman's answer described the "I"



as a "conundrum."<sup>1</sup> Such an answer, we portrayed, is utterly unacceptable to the humanistic theorists among whom we included the symbolic interactionists. Its acceptance would not only leave their theoretical formulations on shaky grounds, but it would also shatter their utopian aspirations. This conclusion brings us to the central question of the necessity of the "self" as an agent in social-psychological theorizing.

On the basis of the evidence presented, we concluded that the advantages anticipated from restoring the "self" as an agent into socio-psychological theories are less than clear. Our criterion of evaluation was the "scientific" utility of the concept. In terms of this criterion, we suggested that the "self" in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism is conceptualized as a single, independent entity which is the locus of causality. This conceptualization leaves the internal agency of "self" an omnibus term to which any unexplainable experiential or behavioral phenomenon can be ascribed. We, therefore, advanced the thesis that the resurgence of the "self" constitutes a way out of the prevailing crisis of values in contemporary western society. In other words, the restoration of the "self" as an agent has a moral justification, but not a scientific one.

This moral justification pertains to modern western man's craving for a "spiritual rebirth," which appears to be sought by intellectuals as well as laymen. The best illustration of this situation is the incredible appeal of Richard Bach's most recent book, Jonathan Livingstone Seagull (1970). This book "emphasizes the self over all else" and glorifies its mystical powers (Time, November 13, 1972). The message in the book has an intimate similarity to the



humanistic theorists' romanticization of the "self."

"Jonathan is that brilliant little fire that burns within all of us, that lives only for those moments when we reach perfection."

In opposition to the foregoing stress on the inspirational efficacies of the "self," the present research corroborates Wylie's (1961) conclusion that only self-referential constructs with specifiable attributes have potential investigatory value. On the basis of this conclusion, we qualified Allport's call for the usage of "self" or "ego" only in "compound forms." Furthermore, we cautioned that the self-constructs themselves can assume an extreme generality and become "umbrella terms" having a weak explanatory power. Examples of such self-constructs are provided by Wylie herself.

"... such characteristics as self-actualization, self-differentiation, and self-consistency have not led to enlightening research... By contrast, constructs such as self-esteem, especially when referring to specified attributes, have yielded more manageable and fruitful research" (Wylie, 1961: 319).

The inclusion of self-actualization among these constructs is worth noting.

Wylie's conclusion has been complemented by our demonstration that grand theories or global theoretical formulations about the integrative agency of "self" continue to be conjectural. They represent overgeneralized statements that encompass a great variety of cognitive, motivational, poetic, prosaic and philosophical categories, all lacking in empirical verification. For instance, the meaning of "self" in the writings of almost all humanistic psychologists is assumed as given or is ambiguously stated. In certain writings of



these theorists, the meaning of "self" is identified with the entirety of that which is subjective.

As for the symbolic interactionists, we pointed out their dilemma of fostering a conception of a "pluralism of selves" while simultaneously postulating a unified sense of "self." It was specified that only the "Me" aspect of the "self" is amenable to empirical investigation, regardless of the crudeness of its measurement.

It was next argued that the resurgence of "self" in both the humanistic-interactionist perspectives emphasizes a holistic-dynamic conception of the "self." This emphasis raises the suspicion that any attempt to segment the "wholeness," or, one might suggest, the holiness, of the "self" distorts the original intentions of the expounders of these orientations. In different terminology, we maintained that the emerging emphasis on the operationalization of the "self," particularly in symbolic interactionism, would eventually lead into the same dilemma of segmenting the functioning and experience of a whole human being against which the humanistic theorists and the symbolic interactionists are revolting. The best illustration of this point is found in Kuhn's (1954) operationalization of the "self" in terms of responses to a twenty-statement questionnaire on "Who Am I?" The answers given to this questionnaire seem to represent nothing but "disparate responses" (Blumer's term) rotating around the social-psychological variables of role, status, and value-orientation. These are the same concepts whose inadequacy for an analysis of human behavior has been discredited by the symbolic interactionists.

Kuhn's study, lest we forget, is one of the first pioneering



explorations to directly employ the "self" of the symbolic interactionist perspective in "empirical research." Tucker (1966) demonstrates two methodological shortcomings in Kuhn's technique. These two methodological drawbacks deal with the effects of the testing situation and the content analysis procedures. They show that the prospect for empirical verification of the basic assertions about the "self" in symbolic interactionism is slim, even with respect to the "Me" or "self-as-object" aspect.

Tucker reports several examples of the theoretical formulations of the "self" in symbolic interactionism that are directly contradicted in research operations. Suffice it to cite only one of these illustrations.

"It was mentioned that the Twenty Statement Test does not violate any of these assumptions or assertions (of the symbolic interaction theory). But when it comes to the analysis of these statements from the Twenty Statement Test, the analyst imposes the meaning on each of them from his own perspective. In many theories this procedure would be appropriate. That is, they do not assume that the perspective or viewpoint of the respondent (actor) is the focus of the study... But...in self theory the experiences of the respondent are the focus of the study. Therefore, the procedures employed in content analysis seem to contradict the assumptions and assertions of the theory" (Tucker, 1966: 356-357).

Aside from the methodological flaws in symbolic interactionism, we recognize that the reduction of the question "Who Am I?" to an operational level mangles the humanistic theorists' and symbolic interactionists' concern about man as a valuing human being possessed of "autonomy, dignity and worth."

The point was well made by Mumford (1965) in criticism of



Maslow's "highly specialized private vocabulary," that includes "neologisms, verbal short-cuts, and abstract tags." Their usage, Mumford remarks, renders "Maslow's vocabulary false to his essential philosophy" which is struggling to restore into the social sciences the "full gamut of human experience including religion."

The question "Who Am I?" is essentially an existential question with epistemological connotations. In Bahm's opinion, "What am I? Is there a self, and what is its nature?" these are the most important questions in the history of philosophy, Western and Eastern. To reduce these questions to an analysis of fragmentary responses on a "self-attitude" questionnaire is, therefore, in direct opposition to what the humanistic movement deplores about the existing models of man in the social sciences. Above all, it should be noted that the question, "Who Am I?" has a profound relation to the ideal nature of man which is at the heart of the romantic glorification of the individual in humanistic psychology and symbolic interactionism.

If we agree with Bugental (1967) that "man, by his very being, provides a fundamental challenge to any pretense to or system of knowledge which man may erect," then we should derive the logical conclusion of this assumption and hold that man is not only a challenge to the behavioristic and psychoanalytic methodologies, but he is also a challenge to the proposed "humanistic methodology."

Although both the humanist-interactionist perspectives have indulged in the search for an answer to the question "Who Am I?", the question continues to be as enigmatic as it has always been in the history of man's social thought. In our judgment, nothing seems to be



more "enlightening" in this context than Buddha's manifesto about man's "greed for views" that terminates in disappointment or unhappiness and draws man, in his metaphysical quests, "farther and farther into a maze of unanswerable questions" (Bahn, 1968: 137).

This implication has bearing on the humanistic theorist's allegation about "shifting the bases of human values" (Harman, 1969) from the realm of the "philosophical" to the "empirical." The allegation is entrenched in the major conflict with which the humanistic theorists and the symbolic interactionists are caught: Their desire to be scientists and humanists simultaneously. The character of this conflict has been described in the present study. It was elucidated that, while the humanist-interactionist persuasions have succeeded in incorporating certain humanistic considerations at the conceptual-flexibility level, they have increased the methodological lag by abandoning certain primary desiderata that allow us to draw a distinction between scientific and philosophic enterprises.

The abandonment, by both perspectives, of the scientific canons as understood in the physical sciences is based on a dogmatic commitment to an idealized image of man. This image implies a regression to the existentially captivating and philosophically controversial pre-Khaldunic question of how man ought to live. The regression signifies a utopian dissatisfaction with the descriptive-empirical approach to the study of man and a plea for a normative-prescriptive approach. The plea, we have suggested, is still grounded in a bewitching attachment to the label of "science" and reflects an embarrassment on the part of the humanistic theorists and the symbolic



interactionists in confessing the kinship of the proposed "humanistic science" to "social philosophy." This seems more probable as the cloak of "science" is removed from the body of humanistic concern.

A feature of the present research was the demonstration that the so-called "new science of the subjective" is an integral part of ancient philosophical controversies disguised under the label of science. Wylie's characterization of the "self-theorists" as wanting to have their cake and eat it too seem substantiated.

We should be aware of a major implication of desiring to have one's cake and eat it too. The social sciences cannot save us, in the sense of supplying us with the answer to every question about the social-psychological phenomena that preoccupies man's thinking. This is a utopian aspiration that the humanistic movement is pursuing. Such fundamental questions are philosophical in nature. Our answers to these questions, like those of our intellectual predecessors, the Greeks, are tentative. Nevertheless, the engagement in the search for answers gives us some kind of rapture and influences our outlook on man's existence. The "meaningful" answers that provide us with "therapy" today might turn out to be the ridiculed symptoms of tomorrow.

The social sciences, in their short history, have not succeeded in healing our "philosophical discomforts." One doubts if they ever will. The present state of uncertainty concerning their success obliges us to appreciate, with some qualification, Nettler's (1972b) statement that, "Our curiosity is an intellectual itch that we will scratch in any way that gives us satisfaction. The scratching becomes



its own satisfaction and we shall not desist because, from some Jovian height, it all appears futile."

The qualification we would like to inject into Nettler's conclusion is this: Some of us are more "optimistic" than others. This "optimism" makes futility more meaningful to some of us. After all, the "humanistic movement" in the social sciences is modeling itself after the existentialist outlook that ventures to create "meaning" out of absurdity.



FOOTNOTE

<sup>1</sup>Castell (1968) surveyed a number of books and articles with the intention of finding out what the authors' reactions to the question, "Who Am I?" were. Some of the typical answers were:

- "I do not know what you are. I do not know what an 'I' is. You must either stop asking the question or be satisfied to remain in ignorance."
- "You are a bundle of perceptions."
- "You are a thought. Your thoughts do not require you to think them. They think themselves without you."
- "You are a group of cognita."
- "You are a set of relations among your thoughts, and between your thoughts and your body."
- "You are a grammatical fiction."
- "You are a grammatical mistake."
- "You are what you do."
- "You are like the smoke given off by a locomotive or the clank given off by a chain."
- "You are the exercizings of a set of capacities."

Castell comments that "these answers are by no means all, but they are typical. The thing that stands out about them is that they are odd, antecedently improbable, and obscure" (Castell, 1968: 74).



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Appendix I

Language

Mead: Communication on a non-verbal level precedes the development of language.

Skinner: A child's unpatterned vocalizations are selectively reinforced by a verbal community to give the appropriate responses.

Mead: Language is an objective phenomenon in a social group.

Skinner: Verbal behavior is behavior reinforced by other persons. Furthermore, he believes that the variables which control verbal behavior can be identified and their interaction to determine a verbal operant can be specified.

Mead: Language is both inter-individual and intra-individual communicative device. The second is more crucial.

Skinner: Language is acquired in a verbal social environment. Moreover, a man "talks to himself" and becomes an accomplished listener as well as a speaker.

Mead: The human individual functions on a conceptual or abstracting level.

Skinner: Observable contingencies of reinforcement would account for discrimination, abstraction, and concept formation, etc.

Consciousness

Mead: Mind is defined not structurally but in behavioral manifestations.

Skinner: Mental processes and internal events are conditioned from outside.

Mead: Mind uses previous experience to determine the stimuli selected.

Skinner: The technique to study "mental processes" is to correlate the observable stimuli with the observable physical responses.

Mead: Mentality consists of controlling and selecting appropriate responses from the social environment.



Skinner: Thinking is the selection of the proper or correct responses or set of responses.

### The Self

Mead: Both the mind and the self are an outcome of social interaction.

Skinner: Both mind and self are products of operant conditioning, and contingencies of reinforcement.

Mead: There is unity and structure of a complete self, plus the existence of elementary selves.

Skinner: Self is an integrated or organized system of responses.

Mead: Play is characterized by spontaneity, i.e. nondeterminacy. Game represents a shift from a nondeterminate system to a determinate one.

Skinner: Shaping of behavior, or the acquisition of appropriate responses comes about through a process of successive approximation. Responses are emitted and not elicited.

### Society

Mead: There is a distinction between infrahuman and human society. If the individual is examined within the context of the phylogenetic continuum, one characteristic stands out - language.

Skinner: Believes in the continuity of the species without reservations. Language conforms to the same general principles of operant conditioning.

Mead: The attainment of a universal human society requires a corresponding self or personality reconstruction.

Skinner: The techniques of behavioral engineering are now available. The ideal society is now within our reach, if we apply them. "The new principles and methods of analysis which are emerging from the study of reinforcement may prove to be among the most productive social instruments of the twentieth century."

Mead: The child abstracts a generalized expectation of the significant others.



Skinner: Everybody's love is substituted for "mother love," in Walden Two.

Mead: The child internalizes the values of society, i.e. he acquires a "Me" part of the self.

Skinner: The "code of ethics" is imparted into the child.













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